US may declare MILF a terror group—Ricciardone

Story below, Col. 2

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It's a boy! Will you marry me? Poor girls!

SI JUNIOR AYOS NA! PAANO NAMAN SINA NENE?

WASHINGTON—A woman who has a boy out of wedlock is much more likely to marry the father than if she has a girl, US economists reported on Monday.

The study, by two University of Wash-

IT'S A BOY/ A7

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Saddam son took $1B in cash–NY Times
  WORLD/A11
- SC: Seize Imelda asset
  NEWS/A5
- Meralco still collecting what SC disallowed
  NEWS/A3

IN DEFENSE of Secretary Angelo Reyes (extreme left), he does—or tries to, anyway—an Elvis number, and brings the house down. And the night's Best Singer award goes to Interior Secretary Joey Lina (center) here escorting the concert's VIP guest. "Terror" of the sidewalk (right), Bayani Fernando, soothes the savage breast. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

3 tenors concert a terror hit

By Marinel R. Cruz

IT WAS such a certified hit that already one of the trio of singing stars was talking of the "next concert." And rightly so.

The "Salute!" concert Monday night was so far this year's top social event with an audience of top government officials led by President Macapagal-Arroyo, the diplomatic corps led by US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, high society figures and business tycoons of the likes of Lucio Tan.

The concert held at the Manila Hotel starred Interior and Local Governments Secretary Joey Lina, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando.

Never mind if the tenors were also known as "terrors,"

3 TENORS/ A20

Gov't to operate Naia 3

Execs who approved deals face sanctions

By Michael Lim Ubac and Carlito Pablo

BESIDES taking over Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and turning it over to the private sector later, the government can go after government officials and private individuals who approved the illegal contracts for the construction of the passenger terminal.

Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban suggested imposing upon Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco) and those who signed the illegal contracts, "the stiffest sanctions permissible under the laws."

Panganiban said it was clear that the five contracts awarded to Piatco for the construction of Naia 3 were "replete with outright violations of law, public policy and the Constitution."

"The only proper thing to do is to declare them null and void ab initio and let the chips fall where they may," Panganiban said in a concurring but separate opinion on the Supreme Court decision declaring the contracts illegal.

President Macapagal-Arroyo sought the nullification of the deal, which was signed during the time of former President Fidel Ramos and revised under the term of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

The Macapagal administration said the airport contracts contained burdensome provisions and were allegedly tainted with

GOV'T/ A18

Business sharply divided over high court's decision

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Doris C. Dumlao

BUSINESSMEN are sharply divided over the Supreme Court's nullification of Piatco's contracts for the construction of a passenger terminal at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport even as President Macapagal-Arroyo welcomes it as "a major victory for good governance."

An official of the Makati Business Club (MBC) deplored the high court's ruling but officials of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and Federation of Fil-

BUSINESS/ A18

Moro rebs hit 5 towns in 3 days

ILIGAN CITY—Not letting up after Sunday's raid on Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, MILF rebels have struck in five towns in three provinces in the last three days.

Heavy clashes have taken place in Pantao-Ragat town, in Lanao del Norte, since Sunday.

As of Monday, at least seven rebels and two soldiers were confirmed killed.

Lt. Col. Francisco Simbajon, spokesperson of the Army's 401st Infantry Brigade based here, said soldiers wounded the leader of the Pantao-Ragat assault, identified only as a Commander Galto.

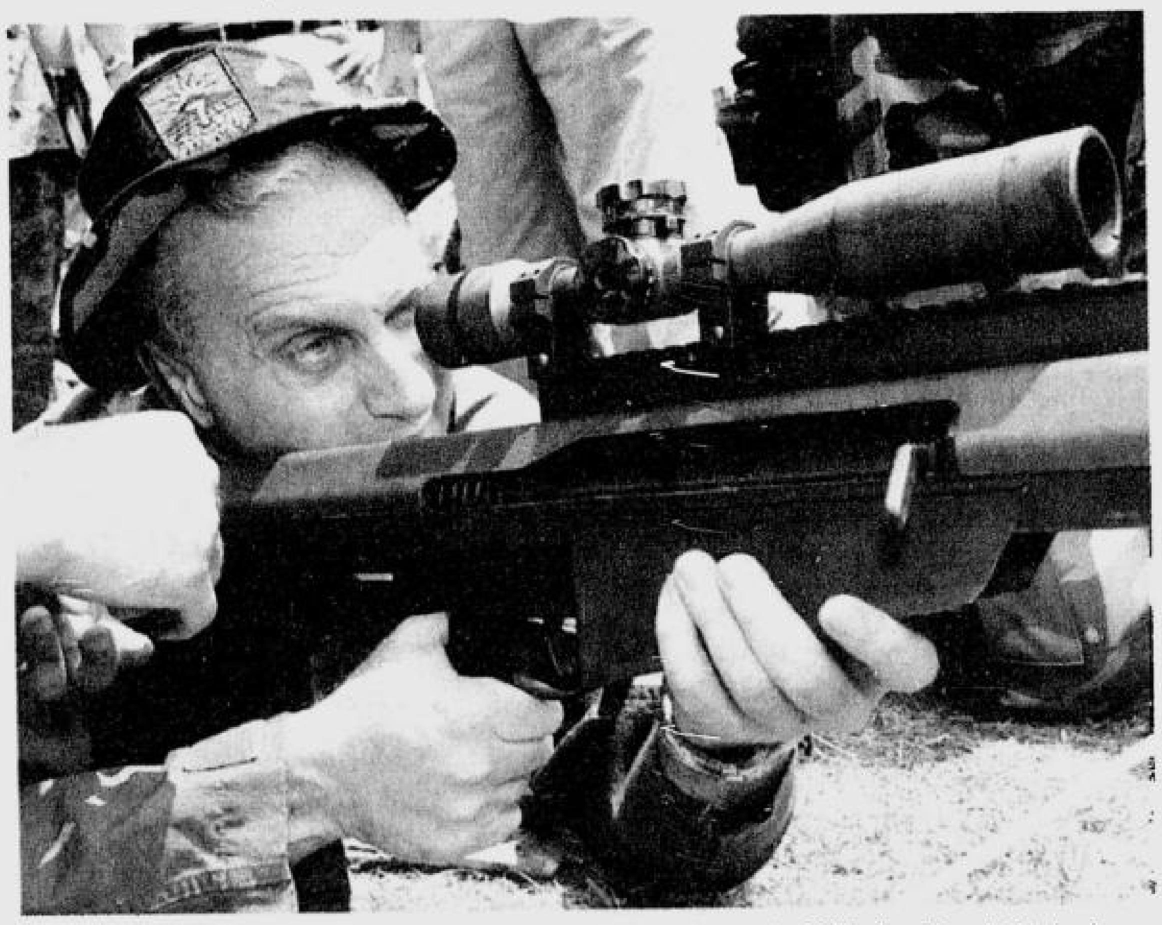
He named the slain soldiers as Corporals Enrico Flores and Winston Cabiles.

In Barira, Maguindanao on Monday morning, the MILF aimed mortar fire at the main headquarters of the Army's 603rd Infantry Brigade, wounding at least two soldiers. In the ensuing firefight, three MILF rebels were killed.

Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga,

MORO/ A17

US may declare MILF a terror group—Ricciardone



GETTING into the act and the spirit of Balikatan, US Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone tries his sniping skills with a Special application Scope Rifle during the war games of Filipino and American troops at Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija. AFP

By Norman Bordadora and Carlito Pablo

THE UNITED States may declare the Moro Islamic Liberation Front a terrorist organization, the American ambassador said yesterday, even as Malacañang continued to play hardball by scrapping this weekend's scheduled peace talks with the MILF.

"I have instructed our peace negotiators to inform the Malaysian government of our wish to postpone the exploratory talks in Kuala Lumpur until we can establish more auspicious circumstances to move the peace process forward," President Macapagal-Arroyo said, less than a day after the Cabinet offered a P50-million bounty on the heads of Salamat Hashim and other MILF leaders. *(Story at right.)*

The President said the government will "pursue an all-out legal offensive against the leaders of the MILF, while conducting punitive action against the direct perpetrators of terrorist acts."

In Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija, US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone told reporters that the United States was considering

US MAY/ A17

Salamat: Wanted 'dead or alive'

By Carlito Pablo, *in Manila*
Edwin O. Fernandez
and Charlie C. Señase
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—Where on earth is Salamat Hashim and the other MILF leaders?

But the government doesn't know where they are.

"We are just around the corner, including chair Salamat," Ghazali Jaafar, MILF's political affairs chief, told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview yesterday.

The government, said Secretary Eduardo Ermita, wants the MILF founder and the four other top leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front "dead or alive," after the Cabinet the other day offered a P50-million bounty on their heads.

SALAMAT/ A20

DOH: We now have 10 SARS cases

By Armand N. Nocum

A NEW CASE and six "reclassified" ones have been added to the Philippines' official three cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

"We now have 10 SARS cases," Dr. Maria Consorcia Quizon, head of the National Epidemiology Center, said in a news briefing yesterday at the Department of Health. She said the six formerly "suspected" cases were a result of "medium local transmission" by the late Adela Catalon.

The first three cases of SARS in the country are a German national who has since recovered, Adela Catalon, and her father Mauricio Catalon, whom she infected and who has since also died. Mauricio's remains were cremated yesterday afternoon at the San Lazaro Crematory.

Quizon said the six cases were reclassified after a thorough assessment by an "expert panel" formed to render a final diagnosis on suspected SARS cases.

The panel is composed of a representative of the World Health Organization, a specialist in infectious diseases, a pulmonologist, a clinical epidemiologist and a representative of a private hospital.

According to a statement by the DOH, the panel will evaluate

DOH/ A7

Serum offers some hope to SARS patients in HK

HONG KONG—Some critically ill SARS patients who had failed to respond to drugs were able to recover after receiving serum that contained antibodies from people who beat the disease, doctors yesterday said.

But even as the serum offered hope for the territory's 495 remaining SARS patients, China's mainland adopted tougher measures in containing the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

The worst-hit district of China's capital sent thousands of investiga-

SERUM/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Visayas and Mindanao and Palawan will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/05/07/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

GMA rating steady at +16

DESPITE Filipinos' rising pessimism about their future and her support for the United States-led war on Iraq, President Macapagal-Arroyo's public approval rating remained steady, the latest Pulse Asia "Ulat ng Bayan" survey showed.

The survey, conducted from March 29 to April 12 and covering 1,200 Filipinos nationwide, also showed that the President's withdrawal from the 2004 presidential elections and her support for the Iraq invasion did not have any effect on the public's opinion of her.

Her approval and trust ratings remained unchanged from that registered in November 2002, Pulse Asia said.

The survey showed that 45 percent of Filipinos approved of the President's performance, while 29 percent disapproved and 26 percent were undecided, giving her a net approval rating of 16 percentage points.

Some 38 percent of Filipinos still give their trust to the President while 29 percent said they distrusted her and 33 percent were undecided giving her a net trust rating of 9 points.

In November 2002, she got 46 percent approval, 26 percent disapproval and 27 percent indecision, Pulse Asia said.

The President's trust rating were identical to those she registered in the November 2002 survey.

"Despite a bleaker outlook among Filipinos, President (Macapagal) maintains the less-than-majority approval and trust ratings she registered in November 2002," Pulse Asia said.

It said the President's withdrawal from the 2004 presidential race and her support for the Iraq invasion had "no net effect, whether positive or negative" on the public's perception and opinion of her.

MACAPAGAL: Unaffected by Iraq war, withdrawal from 2004 race

By contrast, a March survey of rival pollster Social Weather Stations showed that Ms Macapagal's support for the Iraq invasion had caused her popularity to fall to its lowest ever.

Ms Macapagal's supporters were inclined to believe that her withdrawal from the presidential contest, announced last December, would boost her popularity.

"The President gets higher approval (51 percent) among those who cite national peace, but she gets lower approval (38 percent) among those who cite economic recovery among the country's most urgent concerns," Pulse Asia said.

While this might show some public approval for her antiterrorism and counter-insurgency stance, it also showed public dissatisfaction with her economic programs, it said.

According to the survey, 53 percent of Filipinos believe their quality of life has taken a turn for the worse over the past year, while 38 percent said they expect their lives to turn for the worse in the coming year.

Only 16 percent said their life has improved compared to a year ago, while 31 percent said their quality of life remained the same. Again, these figures were virtually unchanged from the November 2002 levels.

"More telling, however, is the spreading pessimism among Filipinos regarding the future course of their quality of life," Pulse Asia said.

The survey showed that 4 in 10 Filipinos, or 38 percent, expect their lives to turn for the worse, representing a "significant increase over the corresponding November 2002 figure of 33 percent."

In geographic terms, public opinion of the President seems to have improved in Metro Manila (from 30 percent approval and 24 percent trust in November 2002 to 40 percent approval and 32 percent trust now), but eroded in Mindanao (from 54 percent approval and 49 percent trust in November to 46 percent approval and 39 percent trust now).

Opinion of Ms Macapagal improved among the upper ABC class (from 37 percent approval and 28 percent trust in November to 48 percent approval and 38 percent trust now), but decreased among the poorest class E (from 49 percent approval and 43 percent trust in November to 41 percent approval and 39 percent trust now).

The survey has a margin three percentage points.

In an official statement, the President said she was "glad that the people of Metro Manila have given me their solid support and encouragement."

"I am thankful that despite the difficult times facing our people, the latest Pulse Asia survey reflects a sustained level of trust in the presidency and approval of the performance of our government," she said. *Carlito Pablo*

Cha-cha assembly rules set

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

EVEN before the Senate can put into a vote its sentiment on Charter change, the House committee on constitutional amendments has already produced a 14-page "draft rules" for the constituent assembly.

Western Samar Rep. Eduardo Nachura explained that the members of his committee went ahead and drafted the rules because the committee was left with nothing to do after the House plenary approved the resolution calling for a constituent assembly on March 19.

But some congressmen are warning that it will be a chaotic assembly if the rules as proposed by the Nachura committee are to prevail.

Valenzuela Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo Jr. cited for instance the proposed rule that the Senate and the House would be jointly assembled but separately vote and determine the quorum in each chamber.

What if . . .

"What would happen if one chamber votes differently than the other? Will there be a bicameral conference committee? And what if one house has a quorum and the other has no quorum, can the assembly transact business?" Gunigundo said in yesterday's hearing on the draft rules.

Gunigundo also questioned how the rules of order would be maintained in a constituent assembly presided over jointly by the Senate President and the House Speaker acting as "Mister Chairmen" under the draft rules.

The rules state that the co-chairs would "decide all questions of order subject to appeal by any member of the assembly."

The draft rules state that no member, senator or congressmen can take the floor unless recognized. When two or more members rise at the same time, the chairs would determine and recognize the member who is to speak first, the rules say.

Gunigundo wonders how swiftly a joint decision could be made by the co-chairs, Senate President Franklin Drilon who is anti-charter change and Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. who is the main proponent of constitutional change.

Equal representation

Pampanga Rep. Oscar Rodriguez objected to the rule proposing "equal representation" among senators and congressmen in the standing committees.

Rodriguez said representation should be proportionate, not equal, considering the numerical difference in the two chambers' membership. There are now 23 senators and 217 House members.

The draft rules propose that the two chambers vote jointly in committee hearings but separately when an amendment is brought to the plenary for final approval.

Cebu Rep. Clavel Martinez has asked that approval of the proposed rules be deferred until after the senators have put in their input.

She said whatever the House members propose should be "palatable" to senators who should not be antagonized.

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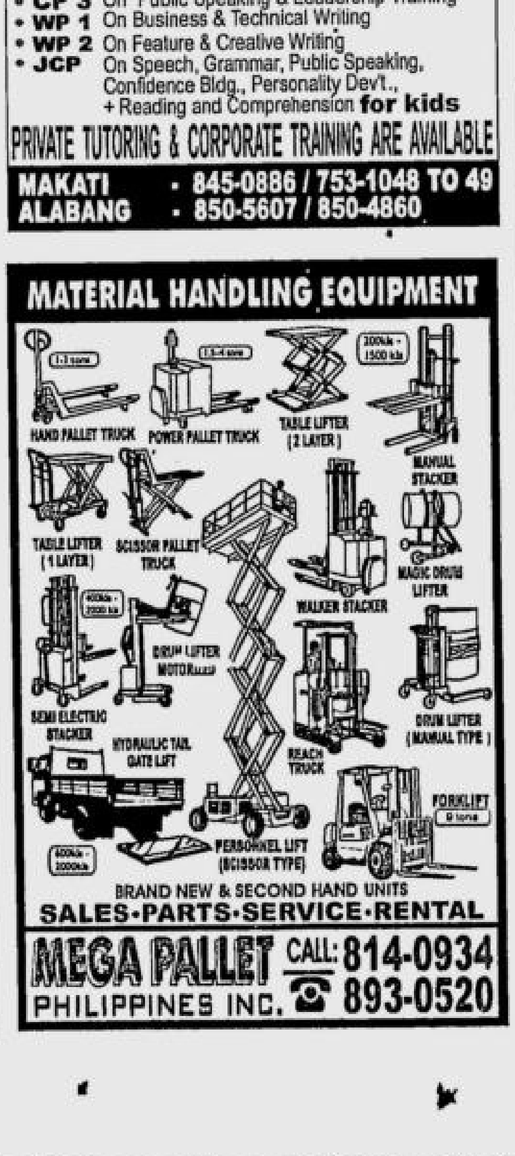

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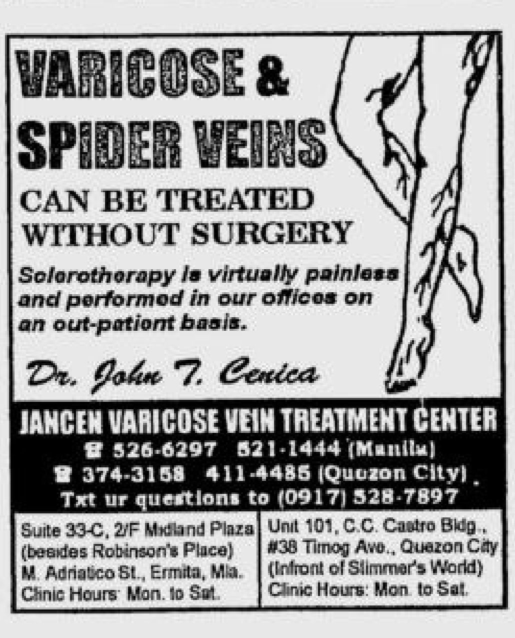

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Meralco still collecting what SC disallowed

By Ronnel W. Domingo

IT has been almost a month since the Supreme Court ordered the Manila Electric Co. to refund electricity consumers some P30 billion in excess charges but the distribution utility continues to collect the 16.7 centavos per kilowatt-hour charge that the high tribunal had disallowed, consumer groups said yesterday.

"Based on the volume of (the firm's) electricity sales, the excess charge adds about P300 million to Meralco's coffers each month," said Renato Reyes Jr., spokesperson of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan.

He said Bayan would formally ask the Energy Regulatory Commission to order Meralco to stop collecting the amount.

In a separate interview, ERC chair Manuel Sanchez said the Supreme Court had clearly barred the collection of the 16.7 centavos per kWh representing income tax payments recovered from customers.

Meralco "would really have to stop collecting that," he said.

In a telephone interview, Meralco's chief of utility economics Ivanna dela Peña said the company would have to confer with the ERC on the matter.

But she said Meralco would likely stop collecting the 16.7 centavos when it starts implementing the SC-ordered refund to consumers of "a little over P30 billion."

"We are not going to avoid this. We will refund our customers all the amount that had accumulated from (that collection)," she said.

Sanchez said he had met last Monday with Meralco officials who had agreed to submit their proposal on to go about refunding customers within the week.

"I suggested that they immediately refund low-consumption customers, say those consuming up to 100 kWh a month, so that we can do it the soonest," he said.

Sanchez added that it would be easiest for Meralco to refund customers "whose identities are established in the firm's data base."

"For others, like tenants who are paying for bills that are not in their names, their landlords should probably be helping them file their claims," the ERC chief said.

Maynilad asked to post bond, not cash

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE $150 million that the Maynilad Water Co. was required to give the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) was a "performance bond," acting Government Corporate Counsel chief Manuel Teehankee clarified yesterday.

Thus, Teehankee said, the Lopez-run utility was not required to shell out cash.

He explained that Maynilad was ordered to "post a bond" to the MWSS by the appeals panel created by the Paris-based International Court of Arbitration (ICA). The bond served as a "guarantee" to ensure payment of all overdue financial obligations, Teehankee said.

By definition, a "performance bond" protects against loss "due to the contractor's inability or refusal to perform his contract." This kid of bond is usually required in public construction projects.

Teehankee said the $150 million consists of a $120-million bond up for renewal in July, and an additional $30-million bond.

He announced earlier that the order was issued last Friday by the ICA panel headed by Danish Judge Allan Philip, retired Supreme Court Justice Bernardo Pardo who represented MWSS, and lawyer Antonio Picazo who represented Maynilad.

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DLSU Batch '79 fellowship

THE HOMECOMING Committee of Batch '79 of the De la Salle University has invited alumni to join the first fellowship gathering at the Cameron Forbes Room on the Manila Polo Club along McKinley Road, Forbes Park, in Makati City today 6 p.m.

They have been asked to contact Marty Cunanan-Plumley at tel. 824-7215, 809-7175 (e-mail: colcons@mydestiney.net); Corky Gotuaco-Syling at tel. 721-0601, 7260522 (e-mail: corky_syling@yahoo.com); and Roxanne Espiritu at tel. 09209023433 (e-mail: lr4esp2@info.com.ph).

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Amoxicillin susp. 250 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓	49.00	144.00	95.00/bot
Chloramphenicol cap. 500 mg	✓	3.40	37.75	34.35/cap
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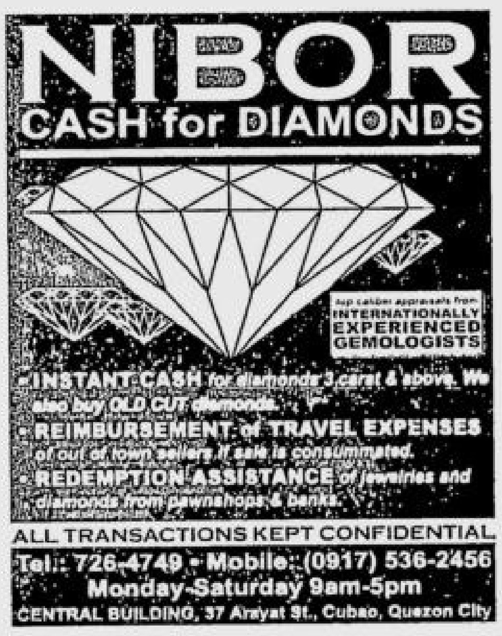
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Pinay's disappearance baffles NY cops

By Volt Contreras

AFTER finally making it big as a senior finance analyst in New York City, Maria Pilar O. Cruz planned to spend Christmas this year with her family in Las Piñas, whom she last saw 11 years ago.

But for almost a month now, tragedy has been threatening to ruin that much anticipated homecoming.

Cruz, 35 and single, has been reported missing since April 13. Her case has left the NYC police baffled.

The mysterious disappearance of the 4'1" Filipina, who became a naturalized US citizen in March last year, has been making headlines in the US Fil-Am community and financial sector.

Cruz, "Pipay" to family and friends, is the second youngest in a brood of five. Her father Rodolfo Sr., is 72, and her mother Renea is 66.

A Communication Arts cum laude graduate of Maryknoll College, Cruz went to the US in 1992.

By 1993 she had moved to New York, working with a sports magazine. At the same time, she took up an MBA course, majoring in Finance, at Fordham University. She finished with honors.

"She is a perfect example of big things coming in small packages," said her elder sister Maria Teresita Cruz Lara, in an open letter posted on the online edition of Filipino Reporter of New York.

The family has put up a $25,000 reward for any information leading to her whereabouts.

Cruz is described in the reports as "a highly respected senior analyst" in Barclays Capital, which she joined in July 2001 as part of a team from Citibank.

She was last seen April 13 at her studio apartment in a luxury building on 305 West 50th Street in Manhattan. Her last credit card transactions were also on April 13.

Tess Lara and elder brother Rodolfo Jr. found out only on April 18, upon their arrival in New York from Manila. Maria was supposed to meet them at the airport.

Rodolfo Jr., a 42-year-old engineer, said he last spoke to her sister on the phone March 9, her 35th birthday.

Hunger strikers ask agri chief: Act now vs Bt corn

HUNGER strikers protesting the commercial sale of Bt corn yesterday urged Agriculture Secretary Cito Lorenzo to stop fence-sitting and impose a moratorium on the sale of the genetically modified products.

Roberto Verzola, at 50 the oldest of the four remaining hunger strikers, said the threat of Bt corn contaminating local varieties grows the longer the moratorium is put off.

"While Secretary Lorenzo seems to be taking our arguments more seriously now, we are disappointed that he continues to be non-committal about our petition," Verzola said in a statement.

"The longer he postpones the moratorium, the bigger the possibility that contamination will become more widespread," he said.

Nine hunger strikers began a fast on April 22 to protest the sale of Bt corn. Five have collapsed and dropped out.

Verzola said he was getting so weak he cannot stand too long or walk too far, and experiences aches and pains in his body.

Still, he vowed not to break his fast until the government gives in to his demands.

"I simply cannot accept Monsanto's criminal contamination of our beautiful land with a poison that multiplies and spreads by itself while our government watches with smug approval," he said.

Verzola also called on like-minded people to join the campaign that he and the other hunger strikers have started.

"If we fall down, please continue what we started, until victory is finally ours," he said. *Leila B. Salaverria*

STOP SARS ATTACK

SARS DOH OFFICIAL ADVISORY

WEDNESDAY 7 May 2003

7 CASES CLASSIFIED AS SARS
One Cured, Others Recovering

The Department of Health today reported that after a thorough review by its SARS expert panel of the reported suspect cases from government facilities, it has classified 7 of the admitted patients as SARS, with one case already recovered and the rest recovering in the process.

The DOH disclosed that all cases, except one, were contacts of "AC" and her father "MC". The one case was an imported case. The World Health Organization noted that this development only shows the importance of thorough contact tracing of any probable SARS case and adequate isolation facilities for patients.

The DOH earlier formed an expert panel to review the patient's records and validate if indeed they fit the case definition of SARS. Cases that they classify as SARS cases will then be reported to the WHO as the country's official status.

The seven cases bring to 10 the total number of SARS cases in the country. There are other seven suspect cases now admitted and being observed in government medical facilities.

Question

My husband is an OFW in Dongguan, China. He is due for vacation next week. He reassures me that there are no SARS cases in Dongguan, but I'm afraid that he might pick up the virus on his way home. I don't want him to infect others, especially me and my children. What will I do?

Reported SARS cases in the Country
(March 17 - May 6, 2003)

SARS suspects, total admitted		75
	total discharged	61
	still confined	14
SARS cases		10
SARS deaths		2
SARS Recovered/Cured		2

Answer

If the quarantine officer at the airport lets him through, it means that he does not have any symptom and cannot infect others. When he gets home, monitor his temperature twice a day by using a mercury thermometer in the armpit for 3 to 5 minutes. Remember that the cut-off temperature is 37.5 degrees Centigrade.

If he registers more than 37.5 °C, it means that he has a fever and you need to isolate him immediately and have him wear a mask. Refer him immediately to RITM (Alabang), San Lazaro Hospital (Sta. Cruz) or any DOH regional hospital near you.

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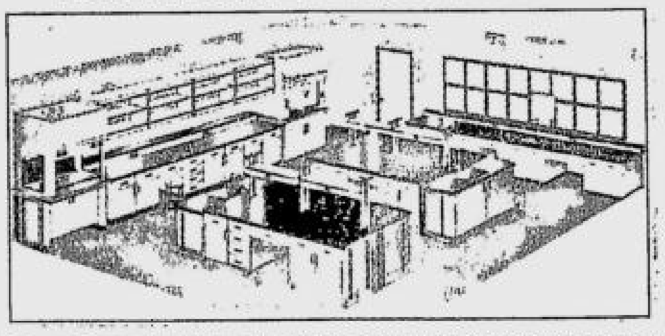
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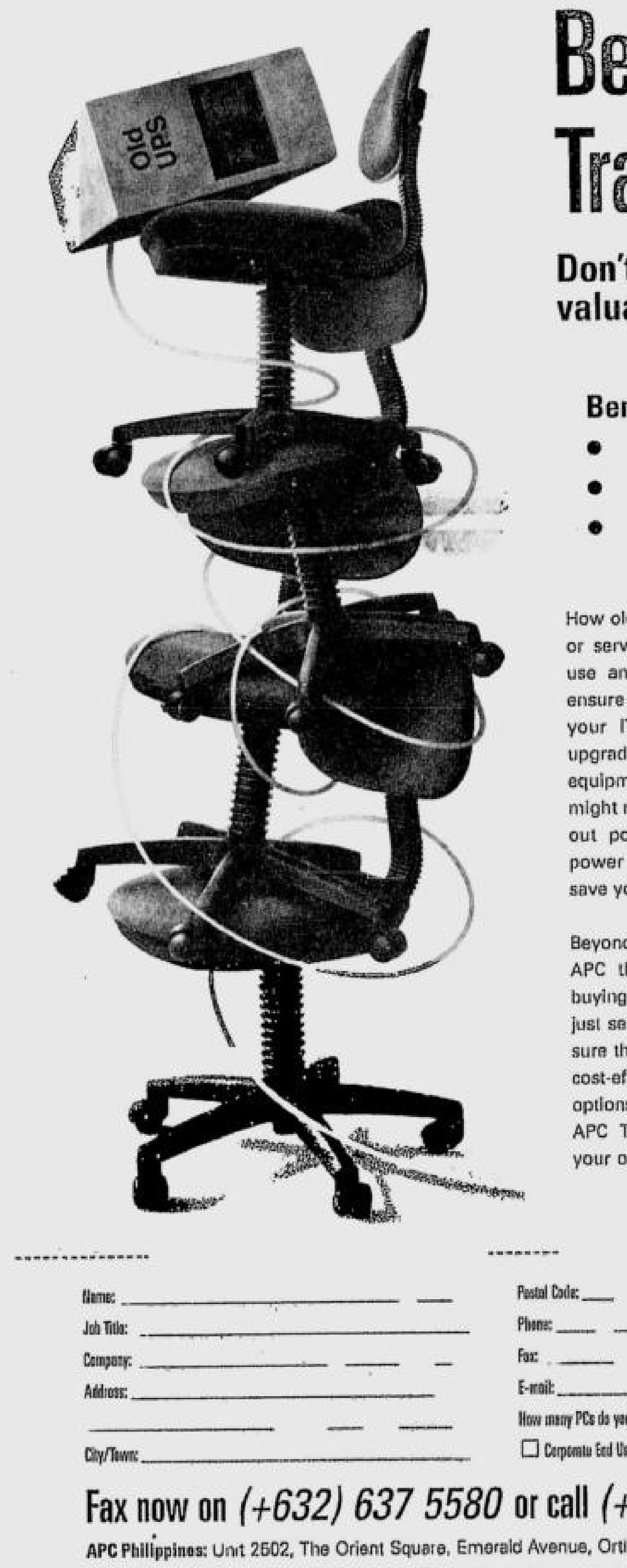
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45 HECTARES IN TOLOSA

SC orders seizure of Imelda asset

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SUPREME Court yesterday ordered the government to immediately seize from former first lady Imelda Romualdez-Marcos and her clan a 45-hectare property in Tolosa, Leyte.

In a one-page full court resolution, the Supreme Court said Marcos and her agents should honor the temporary restraining order it issued on Dec. 3, 2002 by "surrendering possession and control" of the premises to the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG).

The resolution dated April 29 was released only yesterday by SC Clerk of Court Luzviminda D. Puno.

If Marcos fails to heed the order, the government can forcibly seize the property.

The SC directed the sheriff of the Sandiganbayan and the director general of the Philippine National Police to enforce the resolution "using all legal means necessary."

In empowering the Sandiganbayan and the PNP, the SC noted that the arguments raised by Marcos in her earlier opposition to the TRO had merely justified "why the TRO should not be issued, not why it should be disobeyed."

On Jan. 31, the PCGG, through the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), filed a petition asking the court to order the Sandiganbayan to enforce the TRO.

Ancestral home

It claimed that despite the issuance of the TRO, security guards allegedly hired by the Marcoses had refused to vacate the contested property.

The Romualdez clan had long claimed the property in Barangay Olot, about 25 kilometers southwest of Tacloban City, as their ancestral home. The beachfront compound consists of a mansion, amphitheater, guest cottages, a golf course, a swimming pool, a bathhouse and the Romualdez mausoleum.

At the height of the Marcos dictatorship, the Olot "resthouse" was where the couple entertained their jet-setting friends, including international movie stars and European royalty.

The TRO overturned the Sandigan decision last year—in separate resolutions issued by its fourth division on Feb. 26 and Aug. 28—to return the property to the Romualdez-Marcos family. In effect, the graft court's resolutions had lifted the sequestration order issued by the PCGG after the dictatorship collapsed in 1986.

A motion for reconsideration lodged by the PCGG through the OSG was subsequently denied by the Sandiganbayan.

To prevent the return of the property to Imelda's clan, the PCGG appealed the decision to the SC.

22 Pinoys caught with ammo not terrorists–KL

KUALA LUMPUR—"They're not terrorists."

A group of Filipinos arrested in Malaysian waters with ammunition and detonators were on their way to a wedding party, Malaysia's army chief said Tuesday.

"It is the custom in their village to fire shots (during weddings), so they brought the ammunition," Gen. Wira Mohammed Shahrom Nordin was quoted as saying by Malaysia's national news agency, Bernama.

Wira Mohammed said the 22 Filipinos had been headed for an island close to Malaysian territory, and that their boat had strayed after breaking down.

Malaysian Police Chief Norian Mai also said yesterday that investigators who questioned the detainees found no evidence linking the Filipinos to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), an al-Qaida-linked extremist group operating in Southeast Asia.

The Filipinos were detained by Malaysian security forces on April 29 in a boat off the coast of Sabah.

Aboard the boat, soldiers found 300 detonators and 216 bullets, and Sabah police said they were looking into possibilities that the cache was connected to JI.

KL did not think the Filipinos were militants or gun-runners, but said they still committed an offense by bringing ammunition into Malaysia, Wira Mohammed told Bernama. *AP, AFP*

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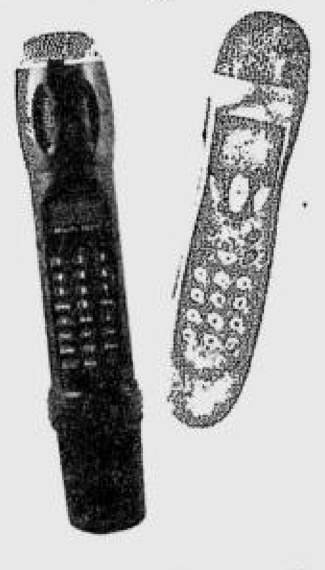

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Serum offers some hope to SARS patients in HK

From page A1

tors on a hunt for SARS on Tuesday and Motoro-a closed its country headquarters in Beijing because a staff member there caught the disease.

The army of SARS investigators was the latest manifestation of China's desperate fight against the deadly disease which triggered another riot by villagers furious that people from infected areas had been put among them. More than 25,000 people have been placed under quarantine across the country.

China on Tuesday reported eight more deaths from SARS on its mainland—four of them in Beijing—and 138 new cases. The new fatalities and infections raised the mainland's death toll to 214 and pushed the total number of SARS cases to 4,409.

6 deaths in Hong Kong

Hong Kong reported that SARS claimed the lives of an additional four men and two women, aged between 71 and 87, pushing its death toll to 193. Hong Kong has now had 1,646 cases, 958 of which have recovered.

Hong Kong hospitals have typically given SARS victims a combination of the antiviral medicine ribavirin and steroids, but doctors at the hard-hit Prince of Wales Hospital have tried other treatments on those who kept deteriorating.

The doctors divided 40 such patients into two groups and gave about half of them the serum while the rest got a higher dose of steroids.

Among those who got the serum, more than half were able to leave the hospital in three weeks and none have died, said Gregory Cheng, associate professor of medicine at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Those who got the steroids and recovered did so more slowly and three died, Cheng told reporters.

Another 50 patients at Prince of Wales have received the serum, and most seem to be doing well, though it is too soon to draw conclusions about those cases, Cheng said. He added that more research was needed before doctors could conclude whether the serum was better than other treatments for deteriorating SARS patients.

"This treatment has only been applied to those critically ill patients when everything else fails," said Janet Chow, a spokesperson for the university's medical faculty. "It is used as an alternative treatment."

China mainland

The news, however, got gloomier in China's mainland, especially in Beijing.

Premier Wen Jiabao said the country's plight remained "grave" despite stepped-up prevention, detection and treatment of the disease which has struck hardest in Beijing, where almost 1,900 cases have now been confirmed. The city has also reported 107 fatalities.

"A great deal of arduous work has to be done to bring the epidemic under control at an early date," the official Xinhua news agency quoted Wen as saying.

In Haidian, the Beijing district with more SARS cases than any other, some 30,000 investigators in 4,000 teams made rolling inspections of businesses, neighborhoods and work sites, district official Zhou Liangluo told reporters.

Twenty patrols have the job of making continuous examinations of the many construction sites in the district, China's high-technology hub where many uninsured migrant laborers work.

"For those who do not meet proper standards, they are put into overhaul and we'll suspend their operations," said Zhou.

Each household in the district of about 2.2 million people had been given a thermometer and emergency contact numbers. In addition, all offices and businesses had to install temperature monitoring systems.

Motorola closes shop

Motorola, the world's second-biggest mobile phone maker and one of the biggest foreign investors in China, closed its Beijing headquarters after an employee came down with SARS.

It told about 1,000 employees to work from home until next Monday after 27 workers had close contact with the infected employee, Motorola spokesperson Mary Lamb told Reuters.

Other foreign firms have closed offices or pulled employees out of China, reflecting a fear of the little-understood disease and, in some cases, lack of confidence in China's ability to control the outbreak.

Beijing authorities said a total of 16,436 people were quarantined in apartments, university dormitories, hospitals and construction sites.

In Nanjing, a city official said nearly 10,000 people exposed to the SARS virus had been isolated. Those quarantined were from apartment buildings, schools and hotels.

In central China, hundreds of protesters in a village and a nearby city tore down fences around two hospitals after hearing that they would be treating suspected SARS cases, officials said Tuesday.

Protesters in the village of Hujiayao in Henan province ransacked a hospital on April 28 and 29, destroying walls and fencing, said a local official. Henan has reported 14 cases but no deaths.

"People were worried about being infected, because the hospital was close to the village," said the official.

Reports by AP and Reuters

SARS BRIEFS

Air travelers assured

THE GLOBAL airline industry and the World Health Organization sought to reassure air travelers that the risk of catching the deadly virus in airplanes was "very low." No suspected cases of onboard SARS transmission had been detected since Asian countries worst hit by SARS began screening passengers in April, said Giovanni Bisignani, director general of the International Air Transport Association (Iata).

* * *

The University of California at Berkeley will turn away new students from SARS-infected China, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong this summer in what is believed to be the first such move by a major US university to prevent the spread of the virus. The decision affects about 500 students who were planning to attend Berkeley for the summer term that begins May 27.

* * *

A 20-year-old Colombian woman who spent nine months in Hong Kong may be the first case of SARS in Latin America. The woman returned from Hong Kong to her home in western Colombia's Valle de Cauca state on April 3, and entered a hospital with SARS-like symptoms two days later. She was treated for a week at the hospital and was released in good health.

* * *

With thousands of Hong Kong residents cooped up in apartments waiting out the SARS crisis, the appetite for news has exploded. Circulation for some newspapers has soared, and so have Internet hit numbers. Callers to a telephone hotline that repeats local radio reports often get a busy signal for hours. Advertising departments of newspapers have gotten a boost from new, hot products such as detergents and Chinese herbal remedies purported to help people stay healthy.

* * *

Thailand will host a meeting of health ministers from 21 members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum to discuss SARS. The meeting has been tentatively set for June 29. Last month, Thailand hosted an emergency SARS summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, along with China and Hong Kong.

Reports from Reuters, AP, AFP

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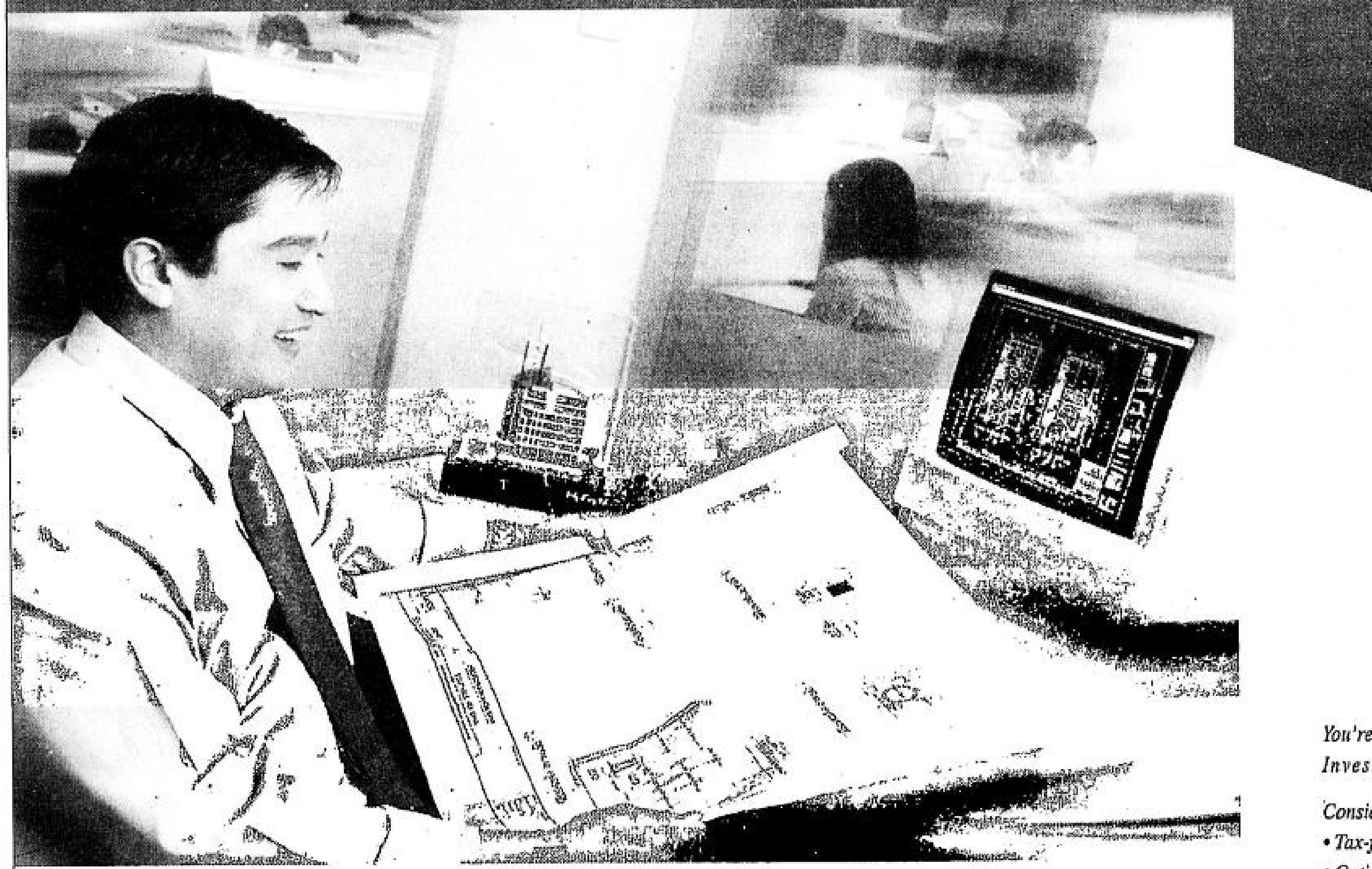

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Viet crew barred from leaving ship

REUTERS

THIS is a checkpoint in one of the provinces of China manned by a medical worker in full protective gear to monitor travelers for SARS symptoms. Similar checkpoints have been set up in cities across China as its leaders call for national unity to combat the mysterious virus.

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The crew of an international cargo vessel from Vietnam has been barred from leaving the ship as a precaution against the spread of SARS.

Alien Control Officer Mita Chuvy Arguelles said the MV Vinh Hoa docked on Monday at the privately owned Bacolod Real Estate Development Corp. port to unload 7,000 metric tons of rice imported by the National Food Authority.

Its 20 crew members, all Vietnamese, were examined by Dr. Hector Torre, medical quarantine officer.

Arguelles said that although no one among the Vietnamese exhibited SARS symptoms, they were still not given shore passes as an extra precaution. She said unauthorized persons were also barred from the docking area.

The vessel is scheduled to sail back to Vietnam at the end of the week.

But the unloading started only yesterday morning because imported grains have to be aerated for 10 hours, said NFA chief Loreto Perez.

"This is because the rice was fumigated at the port of origin, before it was sealed in the hull," he said.

Last week, the Bureau of Immigration also barred the crew of an international cargo vessel from China from leaving the ship.

The Panama-registered M/V Ansac Orient docked at the Visayan Trading Corp. port in Pulupandan town on May 1 to pick up 25 metric tons of raw sugar bound for the United States.

Daily medical check-ups are being conducted on the two Koreans and 19 Vietnamese making up the crew.

Pulupandan Mayor Antonio Suantengco said half of the intended cargo had been loaded on the vessel as of yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Chinese government has cancelled all group tours out of China, including flights from Guangdong province to Laoag City.

"Hopefully, this move by the Chinese government will calm the whole world in relation to the spread of SARS," Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said in a statement Monday. *With a report from Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

It's a boy! . . .

From page A1

ington economists, suggests not only that men may value sons more, but that little girls are more likely to grow up poor.

"It may be that parents just feel more strongly that a boy needs a father around or it could be that it's easier to find a husband if your child is a boy," Elaina Rose, an associate economics professor, said in a statement.

She and colleague Shelly Lundberg, writing in the May issue of the journal Demography, earlier found that fathers of sons spent more money on their families and worked more additional hours than the fathers of girls.

For this study, the two economists analyzed data from a national study of 600 children born to single mothers and found a woman was 42 times more likely to marry the father of her son than she was to marry the father if the child was a girl.

Unmarried mothers of boys were 11 percent more likely to find a husband—even a husband who was not the child's biological father—than those with girls.

Because children from single-parent homes are more likely to be poor, this is bad news for girls, according to Lundberg, director of the university's Center for Research on Families.

"Some men probably see a biological son as their immortality," Rose said. "It's a little 'me.'" *Reuters*

DOH: We . . .

From page A1

seven other suspected SARS cases.

The new SARS case is a health worker formerly of Hong Kong and now confined at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) in Muntinlupa City along with all the Catalon contacts.

Three of the six cases are members of the Catalon family: Adela's mother; Jennifer, a granddaughter who tended to Mauricio; and Adela's brother-in-law, who served as her driver.

The three others are medical personnel: the female doctor and male nurse who were exposed to Mauricio at the RITM, and the X-ray technician who attended to Adela at the San Lazaro Hospital in Manila.

The Catalon relatives were confined starting April 15, but it was only at the end of April that they were found to have pneumonia.

All the SARS patients were recovering from their ailment as of yesterday. The X-ray technician is expected to be discharged this week.

"The good news is that they were already in isolation at the hospitals when they came down with pneumonia," Quizon said.

Violation of rules

Quizon, however, admitted that violation of isolation rules and procedures at the RITM had resulted in the spread of the SARS virus among the Catalons.

"We should be heartless in the implementation of isolation and containment rules," she said.

Quizon said the rising number of SARS cases indicated "how health personnel are risking their lives" to attend to SARS patients.

"The risk is always there," she said. "This shows that nothing is 100-percent safe. The moral of the story is that you should stick to isolation procedures regardless of our cultural values."

She also said the "emphasis" would now be on the protection of health workers and the strict implementation of "isolation and containment measures of SARS patients."

Last week, a WHO representative, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit and RITM Director Remigio Olveda admitted that the Catalons' violation of quarantine rules at the RITM might have caused the spread of the virus among themselves.

Quizon said the DOH had sent blood samples of the new SARS cases to Japan for laboratory tests to determine whether these carried the SARS virus.

Confinement

People living near the RITM in Muntinlupa are stepping up their anti-SARS offensive.

Not content with banning RITM people from their villages, the residents now want all personnel treating SARS patients to be confined at the hospital.

"Right now, no one really knows what SARS is all about, how it spreads, and how it can be cured or even prevented. We can't leave anything to chance," Danny Garcia, president of the Pleasant Village homeowners association, told the INQUIRER.

Until a cure for SARS is found, RITM workers in direct contact with SARS patients should be confined in the isolation ward, Garcia said.

The residents are unmoved by the RITM's stringent measures to prevent the accidental spread of the virus.

RITM personnel directly dealing with SARS patients wear air-tight protective suits that are immediately burned after use. All RITM workers are also required to take a shower and change from their work clothes before leaving the hospital.

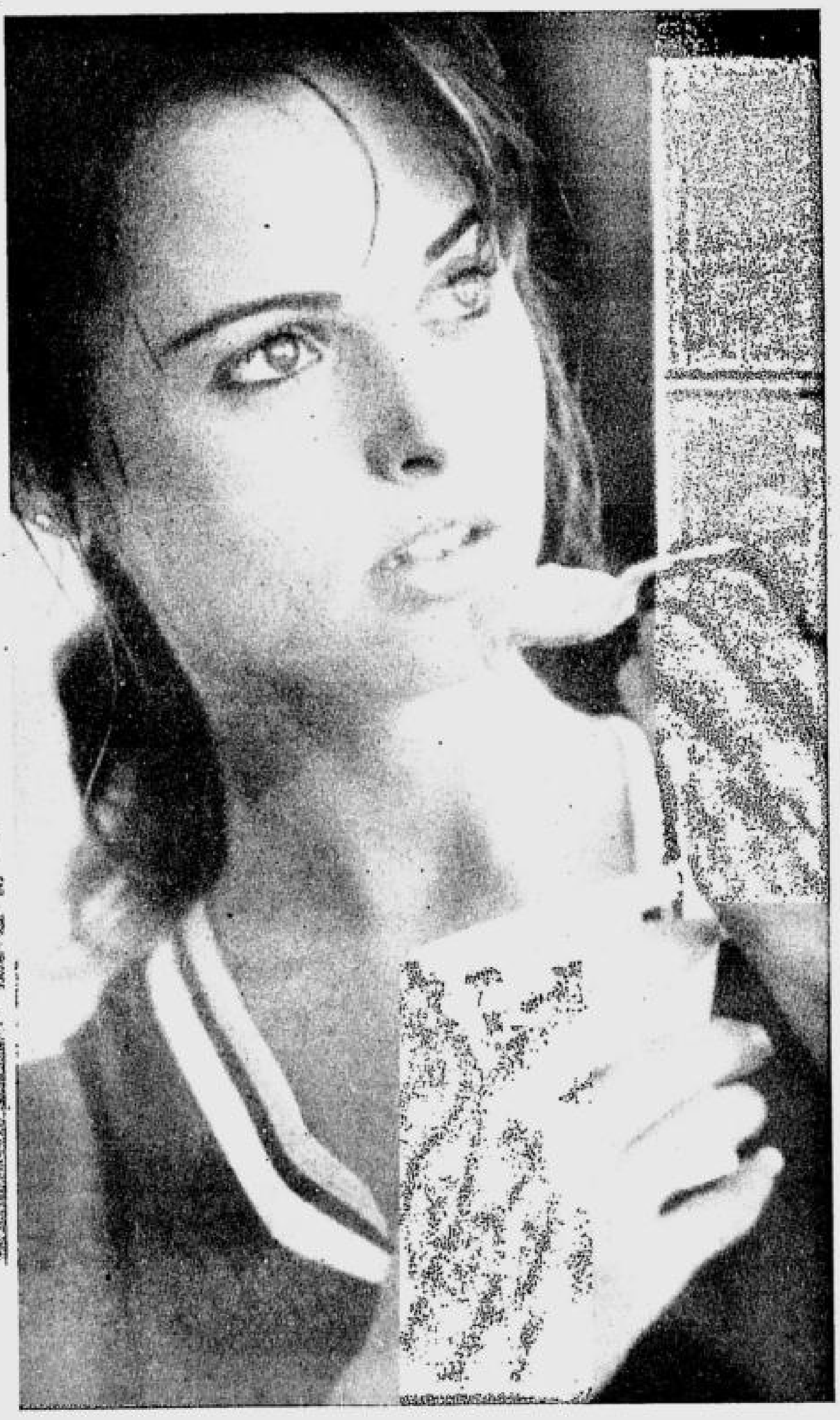
"We can never tell," Garcia insisted. "The problem is that the government can't help you if you come down with SARS. Only you and your family will suffer."

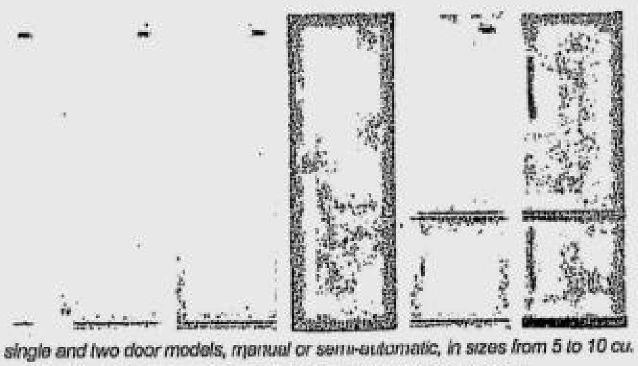
Last week, Pleasant Village and Camella 2-E Subdivision—which sit at the foot of the hill where the RITM is located, and which provide a shortcut for RITM workers going to the national road in Barangays Bayanan and Putatan—closed their doors to hospital personnel.

The residents want them to take the longer route—from Civic Drive, to Alabang-Zapote, then the national road—on their way to Alabang proper.

In this way, Garcia said, health officials would be able to more easily identify those to be quarantined in case RITM personnel unknowingly spread the SARS virus.

"We're not overreacting here, nor are we discriminating against RITM workers," he said. "We just want to be sure." *With a report from Christian V. Esguerra in Manila*





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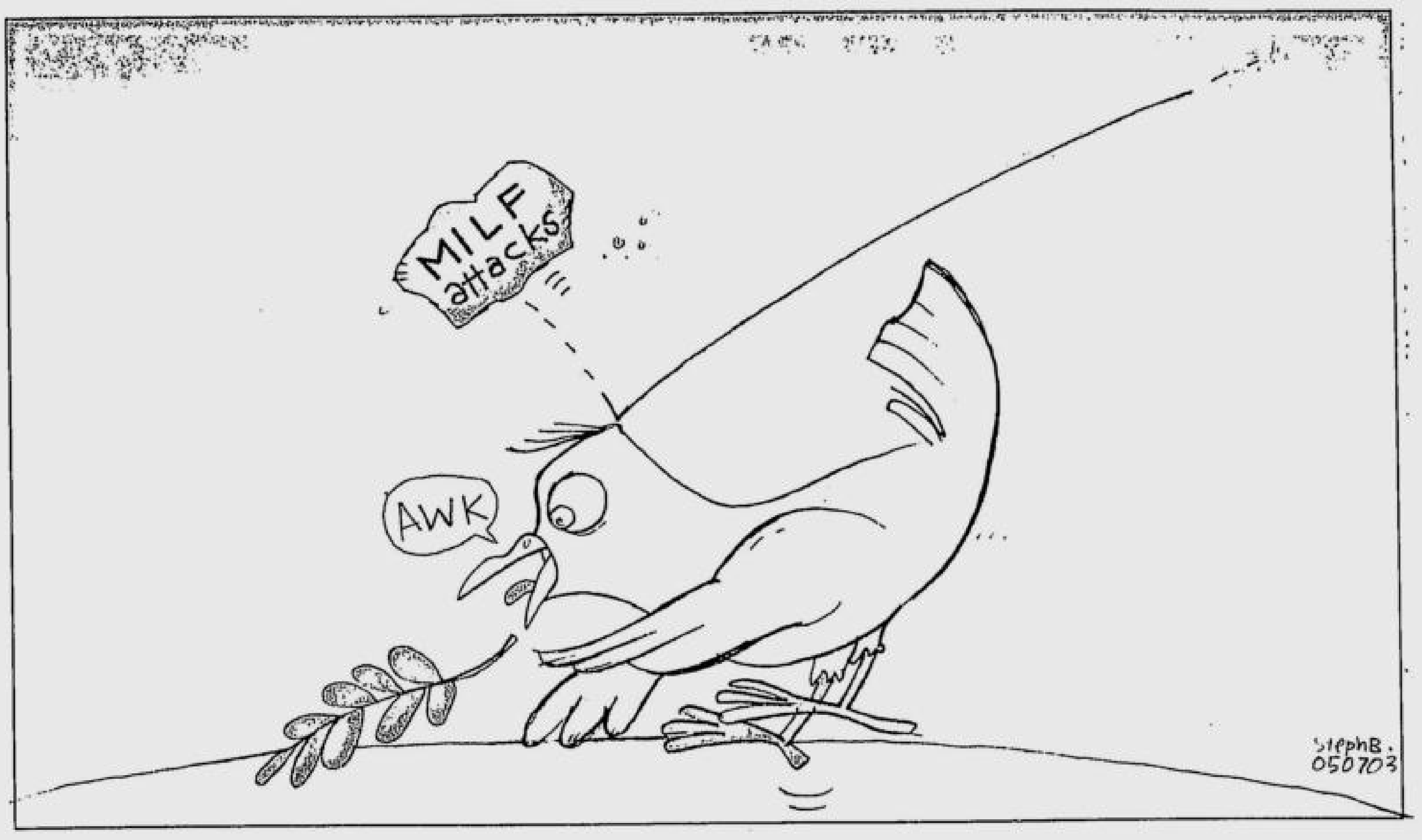

EDITORIALS

Martyrs of SARS

FOR ALL its malignity, the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) has resulted also in an outbreak of sacrifice and dedication among health-care givers around the world. Doctors, nurses and other medical professionals have shown utmost devotion to their mission to save life even if that means risking exposure to the virus and courting death in the process.

Representative of this selfless lot was Dr. Carlo Urbani, the Italian expert on infectious diseases of the World Health Organization in Hanoi who helped discover the virus. It was Urbani who first responded in March when worried hospital officials in Hanoi reported that a sick US businessman was infecting doctors and nurses with a strange type of pneumonia. Immediately, Urbani realized the severity of the syndrome and advised hospital personnel to take protective measures, including patient isolation, high-filter marks, and double-gowning, which were quite draconian even in Vietnam.

But alas, within days, Urbani himself fell ill. He died last March 29.

In Canada, where 16 people have died in the Toronto area alone and scores are bedridden, the Canadian Labour Congress declared last April 28 a National Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured on the Job. The special memorial paid tribute to the health workers who had suffered or died because of SARS.

Despite the strong infection-control safeguards, some health workers in Canada have contracted the disease. Already tired and exhausted, the workers also suffer from social ostracism and forced estrangement from their families as they tried to insulate themselves lest they spread the virus among their loved ones.

The threats faced by health professionals cannot be discounted. The SARS virus remains largely uncharted, with studies showing it might have mutated into something more virulent (the probable mutation explains the high incidence of deaths and infection in Canada, experts surmise). Protection against it is, therefore, largely a matter of hit and miss. It is like going to a room with an unseen enemy, ignorant of its capacity to impair, maim and murder.

Moreover, health professionals, by the nature of their work—the long hours, lack of sleep, deadline pressure—are most prone to the disease, which especially wreaks havoc on those with low resistance and poor constitution.

Filipino martyrs

MANY of Canada's health workers are Filipinos, the Philippines being arguably the biggest exporter of doctors, nurses and other health professionals. In at least one country severely affected by the plague, Singapore, Filipino nurses have earned acclaim for standing by the hospital patients at crunch time.

At the extraordinary summit in Bangkok of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and China on the epidemic, President Macapagal-Arroyo was beside herself with pride when Singapore Prime Minister Go Chok Tong expressed his gratitude and that of his people for the selfless services of Filipino health workers in the battle against the diseases. The President said the Singaporean leader told her Filipino hospital workers even cancelled their vacation leaves because of the emergency to attend to the sick.

The high grades and encomiums being reaped by Philippine health workers abroad are not surprising. Well trained in our medical, nursing and health schools here, some of which are accredited by the West, our health workers are considered expert caregivers and, perhaps more important, selfless, dedicated and natural healers. Filipinos are naturally attuned to the Hippocratic Oath and perhaps most important, to the Catholic corporal works of mercy.

Let us not forget here the Filipino domestics and babysitters who are caregivers in their own right. Like health workers, they, too, have become at risk because of the long hours of work they give to serve their young wards and taskmasters. They, too, have exposed themselves to the risks of contamination so that others may live. It is ironic that in Hong Kong, where Filipino SARS deaths have involved domestics, our maids have been forced to take a pay cut. Now as then, they remain unappreciated by Hong Kong and China.

We as Filipinos should uphold the selfless service of our health workers and domestics abroad amid the grim reaper of SARS as an example of professionalism and humanitarianism. Other countries may begrudge them the salary rates and the credit they deserve, but not us. Let us remember them in our hearts and our prayers.

Legislative coup plot will defer polls, extend terms

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THE PHILIPPINES is about to be hit by a coup. The plotters are not military people but dirty politicians, supposedly the leaders of the nation. Malacañang won't be the victim, it is a willing conspirator. The victims will be the Filipino people.

The plotters are members of Congress, with a cabal in the House of Representatives as the core group. The purpose of the coup: to grab power. Congress will push a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution and change the system of government to parliamentary. The mastermind wants so much to be the chief executive but knows he can never win in a presidential election, so he wants to shift to a parliamentary system where he can win as a member of parliament (the equivalent of today's congressman) and then bribe his way to the prime ministership.

The Senate, which is supposedly more mature, responsible, more sensitive to public opinion and less greedy, and many of whose members are on record as against a constituent assembly, is about to cave in. And President Macapagal-Arroyo, who has repeatedly said she is against amending the Constitution, is now a willing conspirator.

How did the House cabal convince them to change their minds?

According to the plot, their terms would be extended by at least three years. All elected public officials, from the President down to the barangay level, would have a free ride. There will be no elections next year; the incumbents will continue to hold on to their positions, while the Constitution is being amended by the constituent assembly.

Thus, the right of the people to choose their leaders would be taken away from them. Instead, a group of about 250 congressmen will usurp that right and elect the chief executive from among themselves for many fistfuls of pesos. Vote buying will be institutionalized. From P50 for each voter, vote buying will balloon to P50 million per MP. Citizens can no longer choose the person they want to run the government; a handful of elite MPs will grab that power. It will be a legislative coup d' état.

The rumor of a "No-El" (no elections) plot was no idle speculation, after all. It is now about to be put into effect.

Malacañang has already given orders to pro-administration senators to agree to a constituent assembly. Even supposedly opposition senators led by Sen. Edgardo Angara are rooting for it now. Only Sen. Joker Arroyo (bless his soul) is speaking against it. And is Sen. Loren Legarda also softening?

GMA won't have to break her promise not to run for reelection and still be reelected in effect. Senators whose terms are expiring next year will get a bonus of another three years. Congressmen will get the lion's share of benefits. Besides the extra three years, they, as the new MPs in a parliamentary system, will be both the legislative and executive branches of government. The chief executive will be elected from among them. Cabinet members will also be chosen from their ranks. As both legislators who enact the budget and executives who spend it, it would be as if the MPs have a gold mine—which is the taxpayers. There will be no more checks and balances. The balance will be tilted in favor of the MPs and the checks will flow to them.

Aside from that, there will be a bonanza for each MP during the campaign and election of the prime minister. Fortunes and power can be won or lost on the basis of a few votes, so you can imagine the value of each MP's vote, each of which can run into many millions of pesos. We are complaining against wanton corruption and bribery in the government now. Wait until we have a parliamentary system, when the whole government is held in the clutches of the party in power. Remember the Avelino quote: "What are we in power for?"

We complain about political butterflies in the present setup. Wait until we change to a parliamentary system. The political butterflies will look like honeybees swarming to a beehive, the party in power, which is where all the honey will be.

So strong is this desire to grab power that the House cabal faked a House resolution calling for a constituent assembly, faked a poll survey saying that the people are now in favor of it, and will fake an excuse to postpone next year's elections to bribe the President and the senators with a three-year term extension in exchange for withdrawing opposition to a constituent assembly.

Why is the House cabal so hot on a constituent assembly when the Constitution can also be amended by a constitutional convention? Because knowing the greed and general lack of integrity and moral scruples of the present members of Congress, they know that they can control them and get what they want. All that would be needed is the equivalent of 30 pieces of silver. They are afraid they wouldn't be able to control a constitutional convention, uncertain that their candidates would get elected. The convention may not agree to a parliamentary system. But that is the main purpose of the Charter amendments. That is the only way the mastermind can become chief executive.

The ironic (and funny?) part is that even if the plot succeeds and we shift to a parliamentary system, the mastermind may not end up being prime minister after all. That coveted position may be grabbed by his provincemate, Fidel V. Ramos, the most peripatetic president and ex-president the Philippines has ever had.

The change of government will remove the ban on the admittedly ambitious Ramos to run for reelection. He can run for MP in Pangasinan and then have himself elected prime minister. Now, that would be poetic justice.

'Biyaheng Venice'

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THAT was an interesting piece of news Constantino Tejero reported last Monday. A Filipino couple will be exhibiting an art work weighing one ton at the 50th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennial. The two are Alfredo Juan and Isabel Gaudinez Aquilizan. Their contribution is a modified jeepney, one that looks like the original military jeep left here by the Americans after World War II rather than the long one seating a dozen passengers that plies our streets.

The pictures in Monday's Lifestyle were impressive. The artists' jeepney is made of stainless steel and has chrome-plated accessories. Its rear is equipped with a long antenna and an exhaust pipe installed upright rather than horizontally underneath the chassis to allow it to cross streams and floods. But it is also strewn with decals of religious icons and biblical sayings: the Sacred Heart, "In God We Trust," "Jesus Christ Superstar," among others. War and religion, an incongruous—and very Filipino—mix.

The original idea was his wife Isabel's, says Alfredo. They first thought of the *pedicab* and the carabao-drawn pushcart but eventually settled for the jeepney. Isabel herself says: "(The jeep) was actually a discard of the Americans. They didn't know what to do with it after the war. *Sa halip na bayaran tayo, iniwan na lang ang basura nila dito* (Instead of paying us reparations, they just left their trash here). So then they had an assured market for spare parts."

The last time we exhibited in the Venice Biennial was way back in 1964, courtesy of Napoleon Abueva and Jose Joya. Juan and Aquilizan's work was shipped early April and would take more than a month to reach its destination. The exhibit opens this June.

The artists couldn't have picked a better metaphor for the Filipino. I myself have been fascinated by the jeepney, finding it the most expressive symbol of the Filipino soul. Or at least of his life, his soul being something he is still looking for. The incongruities alone are enough to build a library of theses on. The contrast between the martial and the religious, which is the theme of the couple's piece, is just one of them. That is by no means obvious: Few Filipinos now remember, or know, the jeepney was a legacy of World War II. There are other contrasts as well. Those between the traditional and the modern, the utilitarian and the decorative, the puritanism and the exhibitionism.

You can't get a better sense of the history and culture of this country than by riding a jeepney. It's a walking, or staggering, micro museum by itself. The religious icons and biblical quotations come straight from Spanish times, specifically from the kind of Catholicism the friars brought to us, one given to piety and religious excess. And one the early inhabitants of these islands, who worshipped clay images of the *anitos*, readily accepted. The Sacred Heart is the most common icon. But I've seen as well St. Christopher, patron saint of voyagers, "Mama Mary," the triangle depicting the Trinity, and other images and drawings. It's all of a piece with jeepney drivers, who think nothing of blocking traffic and going after other drivers with lead pipes, devoutly making the Sign of the Cross each time they pass by a church or chapel.

In the 1960s and 1970s, those things coexisted with posters or even paintings of rock groups, among them Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Alice Cooper and Kiss, and "folk singers" like James Taylor (when he still had locks of hair falling down his shoulders). Along with cassettes (the huge ones made for vehicles) stacked up on the dashboard, almost blocking the view of the driver. Some jeepneys even sported green curtains and red lights, which made them look like rolling nightclubs at night, though spewing loud heavy metal sounds in lieu of cabaret music. It was almost impossible to get the driver's attention when you wanted to get off unless you had a karaoke voice.

The 1980s brought the famous sign, normally pinned on the mudguard underneath the steps at the rear of the jeep, "Katas ng Saudi." A reference to the exodus of Filipinos who went abroad, many of them to the Gulf, as overseas workers. Many of them managed to send back enough money to their folks to put up stores and drive jeepneys. That often went with another sign, which was "Sipag at Tiyaga" (industry and patience), cherished virtues of the Filipino workingman. Alongside these, there were pictures galore of PBA players, initially those from Toyota and Crispa, and subsequently from other popular teams like Purefoods.

The 1990s did not change things much; most jeepney drivers in any case continued to prefer the rock groups of the 1970s to the boy bands of the 1990s. (A thing I also noticed from hanging around in Markfoods, a place in Welcome Rotunda which closed down in the mid 1990s, which never failed to play "Soldier of Fortune" every night for more than 10 years. It was a veritable cultural researcher's paradise.) The Filipino taste dies hard. What did change were the basketball heroes. The local players soon gave way to the NBA ones, signaling the decline of the PBA. The poster that showed up in nearly all the jeepneys I took was the trio of Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman.

Even before Juan and Aquilizan decided to turn the lowly jeepney into high art, the Filipino as a collective person did it. He turned garbage into gold, a drab object dedicated to ferrying soldiers from Point A to Point B to a colorful one dedicated to telling his life story, like a tapestry, from past to present.

Don't look down on the jeepney. There's genius in that wild and wooly contraption—or atrocity.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@info.com.ph

A blow against corruption

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE SUPREME Court's decision declaring null and void all the five contracts awarded to Piatco to construct and operate the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 delivered a powerful blow for the administration's anti-corruption drive.

It vindicated President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision on Nov. 29, 2002, to cancel the contracts on the grounds that they were shot through with irregularities, and also the findings of the Senate blue ribbon committee chaired by Sen. Joker Arroyo, that confirmed findings of a presidential fact-finding committee, headed by Gloria Tan Climaco, identifying 28 "onerous" provisions of the contracts.

The decision, written by Justice Reynato S. Puno, and concurred in by nine other justices, with three dissenting opinions and one abstention, could not have been more emphatic in upholding the right of the state to annul contracts deemed to be as highly inimical and disadvantageous to the public interest.

The Court put the case in the context of the anti-corruption campaign by citing portions of the President's Nov. 29, 2002 policy statement. In that speech, she put her anti-corruption campaign on the line by declaring that the cancellation of the contracts with Piatco was a "test case of my administration's commitment to fight corruption to rid our state from the hold of any vested interest."

Seeing clearly the implications of the case for governance and the operation of Naia 3 for the economy, the Court did not shirk its responsibility in the face of widespread and persistent rumors about corruption tainting the contracts. It said:

"In the present case, the Court is again faced with the task of resolving complicated issues made difficult by their intersecting legal implications. The Court is aware of the far-reaching fallout effects of the ruling which it makes today.

"For more than a century and whenever the exigencies of the times demand it, this Court has never shirked from its solemn duty to dispense justice and resolve 'actual controversies involving rights which are legally demandable and enforceable, and to determine whether or not there has been grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction.' To be sure, this Court will not begin to do otherwise."

The decision came to the succor of the administration in a case in which the larger issue is the state's right to intervene in correcting transactions that clearly give contracting parties nearly monopoly powers in running the terminal and put the public at a tremendous disadvantage. The Court demonstrated and held that the four contracts that amended the first concession agreement in 1997 awarded advantages to Piatco not provided for in the 1997 agreement. The decision was as emphatic as two decisions handed down by the Court two years ago, upholding the legitimacy of the accession of then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to the presidency after the collapse of the regime of Joseph Estrada in January 2001.

In declaring the contracts null and void, the Macapagal administration faced enormous skepticism over its commitment to fight corruption.

Two key issues were resolved by the Supreme Court's decision. The first was the issue of the award of the contract to Paircargo, Piatco's predecessor, despite its lack of financial capacity to undertake the project. The Court said: "In sum, this Court rules that in view of the absence of the requisite financial capacity of Paircargo... the award by the Pre-qualification, Bids and Awards Committee of the contract for the construction, operation and maintenance of NIA is null and void."

The Court also declared null and void the 1997 Concession Agreement because it contained "material, and substantial amendments, which amendments had the effect of converting the 1997 CA into an entirely different contract" based upon the bid. It said the amendment contravened public policy.

The decision clears the way for the temporary takeover by the government to finish the construction of the terminal, in rebidding concessions for airport services and determining the equity of Piatco, which sank $15 million into a terminal estimated to have already cost nearly $400 million, most of which was financed by Fraport, the operator of the Frankfurt International Airport. Administration sources said that the decision would now speed up the completion of the terminal, under government direction, and said it could be open for operation by September.

In upholding the right of the state to temporary take over a business affected with public interest, the Court cited the constitutional provision which says: "In times of national emergency, when the public interest so requires, the State may, during the emergency and under reasonable terms prescribed by it, temporarily take over or direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business affected with public interest."

The Court made clear, however, that the temporary takeover extends only to the operation of the business and not to the "ownership thereof." It said Piatco could not, by mere contractual stipulation, contravene the constitutional provision on temporary government takeover and obligate the government to pay "reasonable cost for the use of the terminal and/or terminal complex."

The Court said, "It is the welfare and interest of the public which is the paramount consideration in determining whether or not to temporarily take over and exercise its police power."

Supreme Court spokesperson Ismael G. Khan Jr. blasted the argument that the decision created a bad investment climate. On the contrary, he said, "foreign investors would appreciate the decision..., as it upholds and law and public policy."

'Penitencia' on the expressway

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I'M asking friends, admirers, colleagues and students of Haydee Yorac to pray for her swift recovery. I understand that she's recuperating from major surgery and struggling against a serious ailment.

When Haydee was appointed chair of the PCGG, most everybody who knew her, or who just knew of her, was relieved and convinced that at last the government's efforts to recover the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses, their relatives and cronies would meet with more success than it had of late. Much of this optimism was based on Haydee's unassailable record of integrity, competence and courage. Since she broke into the public scene in the anti-Marcos protest days, Haydee Yorac made a mark for herself as an outspoken critic who would brook no foolishness or pretense. Actually, she had been known as a "terror" even as a law professor at the University of the Philippines and cemented that reputation during her stint as a Comelec commissioner.

But it's Haydee's impact on Filipino women that I am most grateful for. She has proven that a woman can be just as strong, principled, brave and bold as any man, if not more. But in person, Haydee could also be warm and charming, punctuating her conversations with clever asides and dead-on impersonations. I hope Haydee is able to resume her responsibilities soon, for the country needs women of her caliber and heart.

* * *

IT isn't only motorists and tourists who're complaining about the state of a portion of the North Luzon Expressway and the consequent traffic jams. Residents of Northern Luzon, especially of places like Baguio, who count on the seasonal summer tourist trade to perk up their earnings, or who need to make frequent trips to and from Manila, are even more upset. Baguio resident and social chronicler Edna Anton writes that "people living north who have no choice but to take this expressway dread this death highway whenever they travel." Since the Philippine National Construction Co. (PNCC) started the road widening project last January, "nothing has been done to ease the plight and look after the safety of motorists traversing this dangerous road," she says.

During the Holy Week break, with people choosing to stay in the country after being grounded by the SARS scare, Edna says motorists "started their *penitencia* early by stewing in traffic for three to four hours in that short stretch undergoing rehabilitation. Instead of feeling religious upon reaching their destination, people were cursing whoever was in charge of traffic management along the North Diversion Road.

"Sure, the PNCC printed a traffic advisory days before and gave sketches for alternate routes. However, I understand from a former PNCC president who is now a director, that it is the Australian group that won the bid to rehabilitate (the expressway) that is in charge of traffic management in that area.

"This company, being foreign-owned, either did not anticipate the gridlock at entry points in places undergoing repair, or were not aware of the Filipino driver's penchant for squeezing into every possible space and *bahala na* if, after a few meters, '*bulaga!*' the four to five lanes of vehicles suddenly find themselves with only one entry point."

* * *

YOU'D think authorities would have learned from the Holy Week ordeal, but Edna reports that domestic tourists taking advantage of the Labor Day long weekend underwent a post-Easter Calvary on that short stretch.

Lest the rest of the country write off Northern Luzon from their itinerary not just for the rest of summer but for the two years the project is underway, Edna gathered some suggestions on how the situation can be alleviated. Here goes:

1. Whenever there are roads being repaired in other countries (the United States and Europe; we don't know about Australia), they put up road signs several kilometers ahead advising motorists that repairs are being done. After several hundred meters, the road starts to funnel with the use of pylons (perhaps, we need bigger and sturdier ones since the Filipino driver will just run over them) first into three lanes, then two, and eventually into one lane. This way, traffic flows continuously in the portion that's being repaired. Of course, we should have several visible traffic enforces who will see to it that buses, huge trucks and private vehicles whose drivers think they are above the law do not ram their way through and create a gridlock.

2. In areas where vehicles have to exit from the expressway, these vehicles should remain on the right lane rather than hog the left lane and suddenly swerve when they are close to the exit. This maneuver can also be prevented by placing pylons and warning signs that unless they go take the right lane early enough, they will have to take the next exit. The same warning should be given to vehicles pretending to exit on the right lane and suddenly swerving to the left, just to get ahead of all the others.

3. In areas where counter-flows are allowed, huge signs should be put up way ahead, advising motorists to turn on their headlights, sending the message that they are on a "counter-flow." Signs reminding them to turn off their headlights should be posted once past the area. "Again, we should have very visible traffic enforcers seeing to it that in the 'counter-flow,' motorists should not overtake or go beyond the area allotted to them as this will create another gridlock," reminds Edna.

"If we are to endure more than two years of hell with this rehabilitation, the contractor who won the bid should make life easier for all motorists instead of making them (the contractor) the company that people love to hate."

Rizal in Japan

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

KYOTO—Rereading Rizal's travel diaries and letters in the country where they were written often gives me some idea of what he saw or felt a century before I followed his footsteps. He was in Japan in April (1888), when the whole country goes nuts over cherry blossoms, yet Rizal did not describe these or even draw the scene for his own notes or for family back home. Since Rizal was a compulsive and very dedicated diarist, it is quite unusual that his diary entries are sparse in Japan and the United States. Comparing his notes on Hong Kong against that in the United States and Japan, there is so much more detail in the former. For example, on Feb. 17, 1888 he partook of a Chinese lauriat and described it follows:

"Chinese feast. U-long tea is bitter and it is one of the best, P3 a pound.

"The table is ready; three saucers in front of every guest; the empty one is the largest—8 centimeters (in diameter) with a porcelain spoon; another smaller one, with soya sauce; and the third, still smaller, with a little cup for the wine; the tiny cup can contain about five to ten grams. There is a table-cloth and a fork with two prongs. In the middle there are small oranges [*surely the type we get in cans today called 'Mandarin oranges'*], salted eggs [*probably black century eggs*], almonds, and other seeds. [*In Manila restaurants today, you get the fried lumpia wrapper generously seasoned with vetsin otherwise you get boiled peanuts.*]

"As each guest arrives, he is offered a cup of U-long tea, the superior tea. Chasan, P10 a pound.

"When the Chinese get a moustache they can no longer shave—60 years.

"They begin dinner with tea; then dried fruits. Goose, shrimps, eggs, meat, shark's fins, [*bird's*] nest, tender duck, chicken with champignon [*mushrooms*], [*sting*]ray, chicken with ham, shark's belly.

"Tea with four saucers—chicken with ginger, fish head, mushroom and pork with two plates of rolls [*empty siopao?*] and tea."

In one of the more innovative projects for a Rizal class, my student Willard Cheng went shopping and reproduced the above dinner. It was both an academic and culinary delight Doreen Fernandez would have enjoyed. Rizal as seen above was so observant and noted everything down, but this all changed when he was in Japan (end of February to end of April 1888) and in the United States (end of April to mid-May 1888).

Of course, I am disappointed by the lack of documentation. Was he preoccupied with sightseeing or something else? After long years of studying Rizal I have realized that when he was silent, that was when he was most eloquent. But then again some people would say that the absence of material is a bottomless pit from which historians can draw so many conclusions.

While Rizal did not write very much in Japan and the United States, he did keep a small rice paper notebook with drawings, notes and doodles that was a visual record of his trip. I can only imagine what he would have done with a digital camera.

This small pocket notebook now in the Lopez Memorial Museum is surprising as it contains drawings Rizal attempted in the Japanese style, using black ink and a brush. We all know he could draw, paint and sculpt since he took up art lessons both in Manila and Madrid, but these Japanese drawings are fascinating because he was only in Japan for a short time yet picked up the style very quickly.

There is one drawing of a woman in traditional garb hiding her face under a fan and here he wrote, in Japanese, the characters for Nippon or Japan. There is a pencil sketch of a woman who I presume is the O Sei-san (or Usui Seiko, depending on which book you are reading) who has been immortalized in the Filipino imagination because of textbooks and the college Rizal course.

In another drawing he showed a woman seated at home and wrote in Spanish: "*ventana de papel.*" I couldn't help but compare his home in Calamba, where valuables were placed under lock and key, and the quaint Japanese houses with windows and walls of paper and yet crime was rare—or at least he thought in the area where he lived. I am not getting any closer to knowing about O Sei-san but Rizal turned to mush and wrote:

"I'm going to dedicate to you the last chapter of these reminiscences of my early youth. No woman better than you have loved me, no woman like you have sacrificed herself. As the flower of the chodji falls from the stem fresh and perfect without ever being stripped of its petals or withered, tender and poetic even after its fall, thus you fell. Neither did you lose your purity nor did the delicate petals of your innocence wilt—Sayonara, sayonara! You will never come to know that I have thought of you again or that your image lives in my memory; and nevertheless I always think of you. Your name lives in the sighs of my lips; your image accompanies and animates all my thoughts. When shall another divine afternoon like that in the temple of Meguro return? When shall the colors of the camellia, its freshness, its elegance...Ah! The last descendant of a noble family, true to an unfortunate vengeance, you are beautiful...Everything is finished! Sayonara, sayonara!"

After all this sentimental text, the next entry states that he is on board a ship bound for San Francisco. He is quiet again because he is seasick and dislikes the food.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Incentives for owners to pay housing loans

COMMENTARY

Anna Marie Karaos
Institute on Church and Social Issues

NOWADAYS it is pretty much conceded that even middle-class families find it hard to own a house. One of the signs that the standard of living of the average Filipino has gotten worse is the fact that housing has become inaccessible to a growing proportion of the country's population.

Most people who want to buy a house do not pay for it in cash but secure financing from a bank or financial institution that provides mortgage loans. In the Philippines, low- and middle-income home buyers can access housing loans from the government-managed pension funds: the Social Security System (SSS), the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF), also known as Pag-IBIG. These institutions are the main sources of funds of the country's housing finance system.

If the system were functioning well, home buyers would be able to continue borrowing because fund reflows into the system are guaranteed not only by the continuous flow of contributions from the members of the pension funds but also by repayments on existing loans. Unfortunately, in our case, loan repayments have been chronically low over the past several years. Fund reflows have been kept down by the high incidence of default on housing loans.

This situation has prompted our legislators to enact bills in the past condoning penalties on non-payment of housing loans. Such measures were resorted to in the belief that the defaults were caused by economic crises such as the one which hit the country and the rest of Asia in 1997. The hope was that the economic crunch would be temporary and that defaulting borrowers would be able to resume servicing their loans once the crisis was over.

But the economy has not been able to recover—not from the 1997 Asian financial crisis or from the post-Sept. 11 global recession. Moreover, if the legislators examined the records more closely, they would have realized that poor repayment had been a problem even before 1997.

There are a number of bills now being considered by the Senate designed to bring relief, once again, to low-income home buyers defaulting on their mortgage payments. Among the measures being proposed are the restructuring of delinquent loan accounts, condoning penalties on non-payment and preventing the foreclosure of housing units purchased by defaulting borrowers. The proponents of these bills obviously want to help struggling home buyers keep their housing units during hard times. This good intention notwithstanding, giving blanket protection to delinquent borrowers, regardless of the reasons for non-payment, could spell ruin to the already strained housing finance system. The small amount of funds flowing back into the system due to poor repayment is a major cause of the system's inability to serve more clients. The logic is simple: when fewer people pay back their loans, fewer people are able to borrow.

Passing the proposed bills is therefore ill-advised for a number of reasons. For one, we do not have solid data on the actual reasons why defaulting borrowers are unable to pay their loan amortizations. The Senate bills claim that out of about 185,000 total borrowers, only around 55,000 have updated loan payments. It does not seem likely that the 130,000 borrowers who are in default are all victims of past economic crises. A more careful analysis of the payment history of these borrowers would likely reveal a variety of reasons for non-payment. Some borrowers for instance have complained about the quality of their housing units and therefore refuse to make payments on them. In such a case, the reason for non-payment is not the inability to pay. Unless we have good data that allow us to distinguish different categories of defaulting borrowers and the different reasons for non-payment, the wholesale solutions we come up with will not solve the problem and may even aggravate it.

Secondly, it is even possible that the government's consistent failure to penalize defaulting borrowers has contributed to the high default rate by removing the incentive to pay. The government's apparent helplessness in enforcing loan obligations through foreclosure and the imposition of penalties unwittingly encourages and rewards non-payment. The proposed bills will only legitimize and reinforce this weakness.

Finally, it seems a better strategy at this point to support ongoing efforts by the home lending institutions to improve their collection efficiency and ability to extend housing loans. Pag-IBIG has dramatically improved its efficiency in delivering loan take-outs, vastly expanding its capacity to provide loans to low-income home buyers. The proposed bills could slow down this momentum achieved by Pag-IBIG, currently the biggest source of home lending funds.

In other words, instead of prescribing a uniform response to the problem of non-payment such as the bills propose, the financial institutions should be allowed to design and implement their own remedies without sacrificing their financial security. These remedies could take the form of loan restructuring schemes which take into account the specific circumstances of their respective clients. After all, these agencies are in a better position to know the needs of their clients as well as their institutional capacity to absorb whatever costs such schemes might entail.

If low- and middle-income families are finding it hard to keep up with their loan amortization nowadays, others could find it even harder to take out a housing loan in the first place if the problem of non-payment is not properly dealt with. The key is providing the right incentive for borrowers to pay by enforcing payment obligations as strictly as possible.

THEY SAID

GMA's mandate

"My mandate from the President is to raise the Philippine flag in post-war Iraq and make sure that everyone knows that the Philippines can supply all construction projects."

—Newly appointed RP Ambassador to Iraq Jose Ibazeta

Limitless

"There is a limit to what government can do."

—Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas on not having announced the traditional incentives this Labor Day

Unusual scholar

"I am not the studious type. I did not become a summa cum laude because I read hundreds of books."

—Edson Tandoc Jr., first-ever summa cum laude graduate of the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communications

Sandiganbayan delaying decision on coco levy case

I WRITE to express utmost dismay over the failure of the Sandiganbayan's First Division to come up with a final resolution on the coco levy cases, as stipulated by the Supreme Court in its decision on Dec. 14, 2001. In that decision, the Supreme Court said that "coco levy funds are not only affected with public interest; they are, in fact, prima facie public funds." However, the determination of the ownership of the assets in question lies within the jurisdiction of the Sandiganbayan.

Based on Supreme Court pronouncements, the decision on this issue should have been issued last February, after the Court extended what used to be a six-month deadline due to the suspension of former Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena of the First Division. It is now two months overdue after the extension period, which lasted one whole year.

These coco levy cases have remained pending in the courts for 15 long years now. Even the Supreme Court recognized this when it ordered the Sandiganbayan to finally settle the controversy and to decide with finality within a given period.

So where is the decision? Could it have been affected by the recent reports that Danding Cojuangco might run for the presidency in 2004? Is the anti-graft court waiting to see who is running for president before resolving the cases?

I wonder what the Supreme Court is doing about the delay.

This time is the closest coconut farmers ever got into recovering the multi-billion coco-levy funded assets. Yet, their apprehension rises as the Sandiganbayan delays its making a decision. The least that the courts can do is to be transparent on what exactly is happening.

—JOEY FAUSTINO,
executive director,
Coconut Industry Reform (COIR)
Movement Inc., 84 Unit 1 DN,
Masikap St., Barangay Central,
Diliman, Quezon City

Protection vs SARS a human right

THIS is in reaction to news reports on the "national emergency" caused by SARS.

Finally, after proudly declaring the Philippines to be SARS-free and encouraging foreigners to come here because of this, despite reports of probable cases of SARS, the government has admitted that the Philippines is no longer free of the deadly virus. Because of this, the government said officials could invoke their police power to detain quarantine violators and punish profiteers. President Macapagal-Arroyo even said that "the possible implementation of very strong discipline to contain SARS is not an issue of human rights but of human survival."

The President might have forgotten that human survival means the right to life, and protecting people from being inflicted with SARS is very much about respecting and protecting people's right to life, ergo human survival.

This gives the government more reason to do everything to ensure that those who sell masks, vitamins and other items used to fight the SARS-causing virus do not take advantage of the situation by unreasonably increasing prices.

It has been reported that N95 masks are being sold at triple their normal price. Again, this is an issue of human rights. It is part of the people's rights to have access to things that prevent them from getting the illness. However, if these items become very expensive, then having access to them would no longer be a right but a privilege of a few. The government has an obligation to protect the people against opportunists.

We laud the doctors, nurses and the other people who are in the frontline of taking care of those who have or are suspected of having SARS. They are most at risk of getting the SARS-causing virus, but they still treat patients without discrimination. They have not faltered in respecting the patients' rights. The government ought to consider giving these professionals additional compensation or "high-risk pay."

In the meantime, the government should add to its list of "must do" the task of continuing to educate our people. Protecting those who can be inflicted with SARS should not mean disrespecting the rights of those who are already infected.

—AURORA A. PARONG, M.D.,
executive director,
Task Force Detainees
of the Philippines,
19 Malingap St.,
Teacher's Village, Quezon City

Mother's Day
SALE
UP TO
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How Malabon fights diseases

MOST of us tend to be reactive. The tumult brought about by concerns on possible outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is but a reflection of this trait.

Efforts to address the problem are more often than not ad hoc in nature. Most likely, community programs dealing with this problem will fold up as soon as media attention on the matter fades. Such temporary approaches fail to recognize that more than the cure, prevention is always the best weapon against whatever kind of disease.

Amid the paranoia brought about by SARS, the public also ought to give due recognition to communities whose sustained community health programs helped prevent these types of diseases from spreading.

In Malabon, for instance, control of communicable diseases and an expanded immunization program have been effective safeguards against known types of communicable diseases. On top of this, the city's focus on garbage collection and pollution control made it possible for the city's top officials to guarantee its constituents a healthy environment in spite of the area's susceptibility to frequent flooding.

The priority programs of Mayor Amado Vicencio include construction of garbage recycling facilities, state-of-the-art waste disposal services, dump rehabilitation and clean and secure relocation sites for squatters.

Malabon should be a model for other communities. The adoption by other communities of similar sustainable projects could whip up a national passion for cleanliness and disease prevention.

This is our only insurance against SARS and similar diseases.

—DR. BOBBY ROMERO,
head, Department of Health,
Malabon City

An unscientific view of reproductive health

WHOEVER says "say it now or forever hold your peace" never has had to contend with a Jess Abrera cartoon in the INQUIRER's editorial page. There's always time to say your piece again—unfortunately.

In September 2002 your editorial cartoon depicted the Reproductive Health Care Bill (HB 4110) as a demon piercing a woman's womb and attacking the "dignity of life." A few months later, on April 17, 2003, Holy Thursday, your editorial cartoon carried a similar opinion about reproductive health services. It depicted birth control methods as deadly weapons attacking a child supposedly being nailed to the cross by Roman soldiers.

I am extremely distressed by the fact that reproductive health care and services are represented as murderous weapons against women and children. These are being "demonized" via sketches of a fork-wielding Satan, and dagger-wielding brutal Roman soldiers. But such sketches present very unscientific, obviously conservative religious opinions that obscure the fact that reproductive health and services are two of the most legitimate needs of Filipinos who are poor.

Our country now has an 80 million population with an annual growth rate of 2.36 percent, one of the highest in Asia. According to Unicef, the Philippines has a fertility rate of 3.4 children per woman, one of the highest in the world outside Africa. If no actions are taken to address this, we will be 130 million by 2025 and down to unimaginable levels of poverty.

One practical way to address this problem is through contraceptives. Reproductive health care and services have been recognized internationally as important toward addressing poverty and underdevelopment. These are enshrined in the Platform for Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to which the Philippines is one of the 179 signatories.

The Population Commission recognizes family planning or spacing children at the right age and time as "the single most important step toward arresting poverty and improving social conditions."

While contraceptives are practical ways of addressing the intricate issue of population control, their availability is an important starting point of any initiative.

—LALAINE P. VIADO,
49 Mahiyain St., Teacher's Village,
Quezon City

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Saddam son took $1B in cash–NY Times

WASHINGTON—Hours before the first US bombs rained on Baghdad, Saddam Hussein sent his son Qusay to the vaults of the Iraqi Central Bank to load nearly $1billion onto three tractor trailers, The New York Times said Tuesday.

"When you get an order from Saddam Hussein, you do not discuss it," said an Iraqi official who asked not to be identified.

He said Qusay turned up at the vaults with a letter from the dictator authorizing the seizure at 4 a.m. local time on March 18 to carry out what could be the biggest bank heist in history.

The money—around 900 million in US 100 dollar bills and 100 million in Euros according to a US official—was possibly smuggled into Syria where it disappeared, along with Qusay and Hussein's personal assistant Abid al-Hamid Mahmood.

Some believe the money is being used to finance Saddam's exile, but members of the Iraqi National Congress fear it could be used for a "post-occupation strategy" that envisions Saddam's eventual return to power.

The anonymous Iraqi official who provided details of the "withdrawal" and who held a senior position in the Iraqi Central Bank under Saddam, said he was afraid the former dictator or his associates could track him down and kill him.

Since Saddam Hussein was Iraq's absolute ruler for nearly 20 years, the legal aspects of Qusay's cash seizure were unclear, but the Iraqi official said Iraqi banks were not plundered much by the despot and his family.

"Sometimes they would come in for small amounts, maybe $5million," said the official.

In their predawn foray at the bank, Qusay and Mahmood were accompanied by the director of the Central Bank, the Iraqi finance minister, the director of the Iraqi treasury, a group of workers who loaded the cash and the truck drivers, the official said.

Former Iraqi finance minister Hekmet al-Azawi, was already in American custody in Baghdad, he added US Treasury Department official George Mullinax said part of the $900 million seized by Qusay may have been recovered last month when US troops found $650 million in 100 dollar bills stashed in one of Saddam's palaces.

The Iraqi official, however, believes that money belonged to Saddam's eldest son, Uday, who had a reputation of hoarding cash. "That was Uday's money," he told The New York Times.

The money Qusay took represented about one fourth of the central bank's hard currency reserves, the Iraqi official said.

It is also about twice as much as Iraqis looted from their banks across the country after Saddam's fall—some 400 million US dollars and 40 million in Iraqi currency, according to US and Iraqi officials. *AFP*

HUDA SALIH MAHDI AMMASH

Iraq's 'Mrs. Anthrax' nabbed by US forces

WASHINGTON—US forces have taken into custody a US-educated microbiologist dubbed "Mrs. Anthrax" who was active in germ warfare development under President Saddam Hussein, defense officials said on Monday.

Huda Salih Mahdi Ammash, the only woman included in the US military's list of 55 most-wanted Iraqi fugitives, was taken into custody in Baghdad on Sunday by US troops, said the defense officials, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Ammash was designated as No. 53 on the list and was the five of hearts in the US military's deck of cards of wanted Iraqis. Eighteen of the 55 have been taken into custody, with another three dead, according to the Pentagon.

A US official said Ammash may have potentially useful information.

"She has intimate knowledge of the workings of Iraq's BW (biological warfare) program and the nature and the extent of that program, as well (to) be in a position to know possible locations of where material or production facilities might be located," the official said.

US forces have found no evidence of the Iraqi chemical and biological weapons that American leaders cited as a key reason for the war that toppled Saddam's government.

Ammash, 49, earned a doctorate in microbiology from the University of Missouri in 1983. She earned a master's degree from Texas Woman's University in 1979.

Ammash's father was a leader of the 1968 Baath Party revolution who served as an Iraqi minister and ambassador before being killed in the 1980s, reportedly on Saddam's order, the US official said.

She was the first woman appointed to Iraq's Baath Party regional command in May 2001, she has been a vocal advocate for the regime's policies at home and abroad. She at one point oversaw the activities of Baath Party organizations in Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen while a member of the Baghdad branch command. *Reuters*

Asians can join Iraq stabilization force, says Polish defense official

WARSAW—Asian countries including India, Pakistan or the Philippines could join a multinational "stabilization" force planned for Iraq, Polish Deputy Defense Minister Janusz Zemke said Monday.

In Lisbon, Portuguese President Jorge Sampaio—who opposed the Iraq war—said he would support Portuguese participation in the planned force if this were backed by international organizations.

Eleven European countries had expressed interest in contributing to the force, in addition to the three planned core members—the United States, Britain and Poland, Zemke said on Polish radio.

"We are also getting signs that certain Asian countries, for example India, Pakistan and the Philippines, would be prepared to send troops," he added.

Washington is said to be formulating a postwar plan carving Iraq into three or possibly four military sectors, each controlled by one of the partners that backed the US-led invasion.

The United States, Britain and Poland would administer three sectors and a possible fourth would be managed by a country yet to be decided, Polish Defense Minister Jerzy Szmajdzinski said Sunday.

Details that have emerged of the US plan indicate that the United Nations would not be consulted and that Washington would bypass France, Germany, Russia and other nations that opposed the war.

In Paris, a government spokesperson avoided direct comment on the proposed new multinational force, but reiterated the French position that the UN must have a central role in Iraqi reconstruction.

"We are currently still at a stage of securing the territory in which there will be a reconfiguration of the occupation force and a diversification of its personnel," said Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Francois Rivasseau. *AFP*

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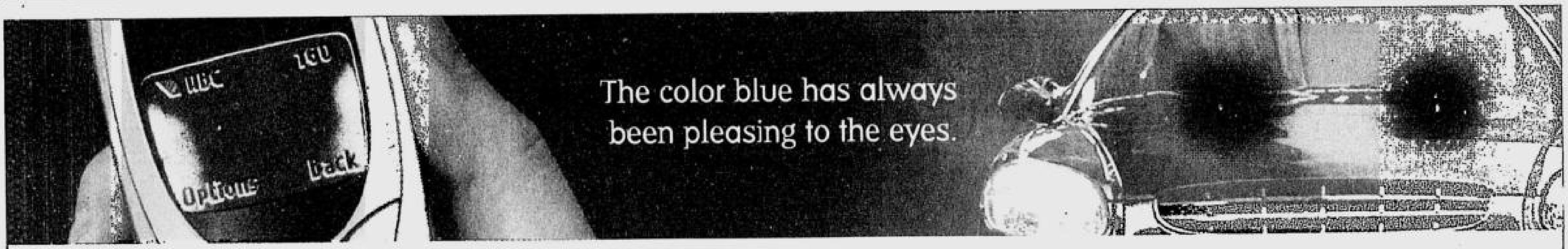

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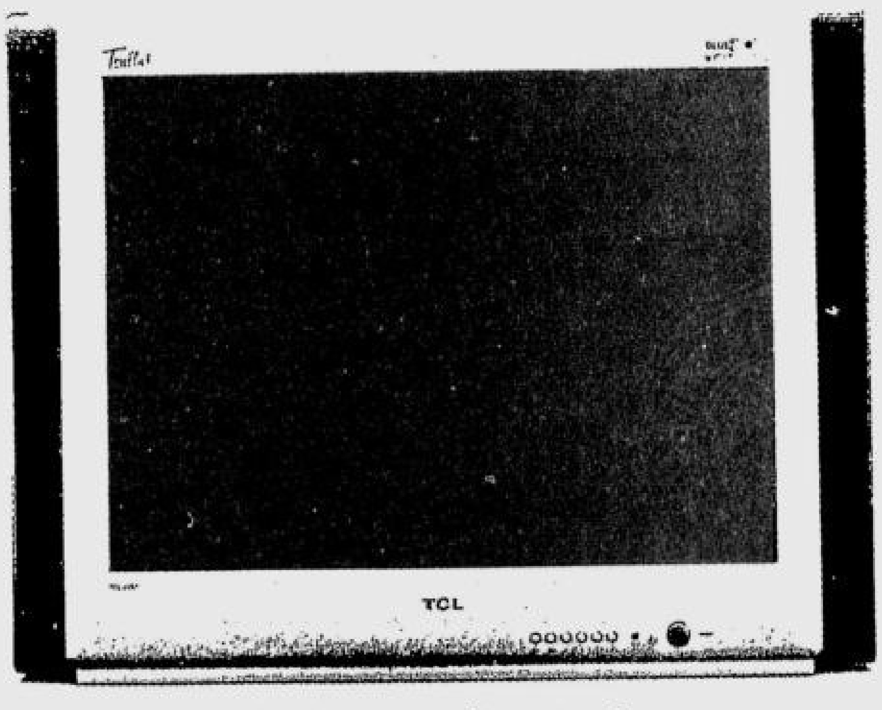

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Death toll from US Midwest tornadoes mounts

PIERCE CITY, Missouri—Searchers using dogs and heavy equipment went from one crumbled home to another after tornado-packed storms flattened communities in three states and killed at least 37 people. Ten people were missing, including eight in this southwestern Missouri town.

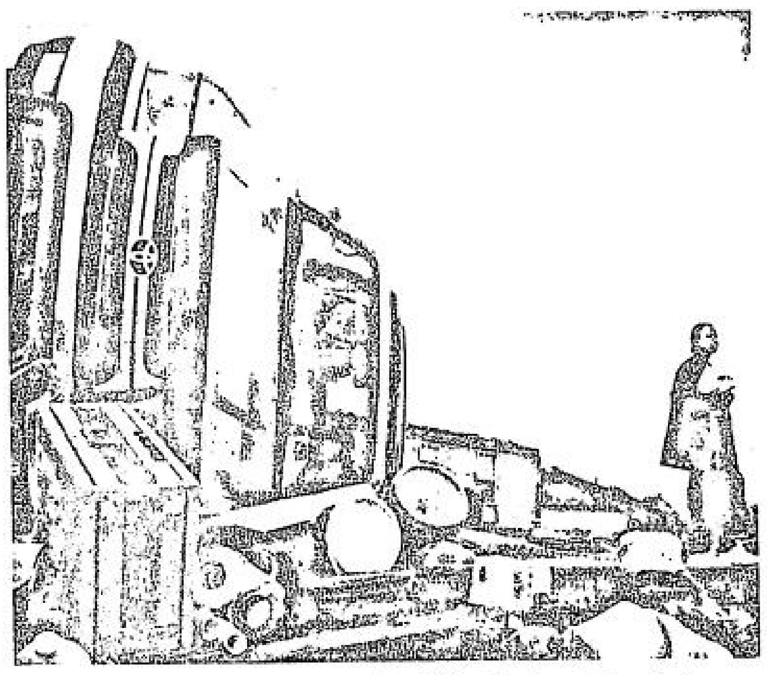
It was "the most devastating series of tornadoes we've ever had in the state of Missouri," Gov. Bob Holden said Monday after walking the rubble-strewn streets of Pierce City.

The storms were blamed for at least 17 deaths in Missouri, seven in Kansas and 13 in Tennessee, where a single tornado carved a 105-km path of destruction. The storms also brought hail and heavy rain; three of the victims drowned trying to drive on a flooded road near Nashville, Tennessee.

"It's worse than a nightmare," said Stacy Silverwood, whose grandparents were killed by a twister that blew part of their Camden County, Missouri, house down a hill and into a pond 800 meters away.

The storms were part of a huge weather system that also spawned twisters Sunday and early Monday in Arkansas, Mississippi, Kentucky, South Dakota and Nebraska. The National Weather Service posted new tornado warnings in Kentucky and Tennessee as the storm system moved eastward.

One of the hardest hit areas was Madison County, Tennessee, where 10 people were killed. Rescue crews with cadaver dogs were searching a small lake for a father and son who were missing. *AP*



STANDING beside her overturned vehicle, Carolyn Tucker looks over her possessions, May 5, in Madison suburb of Nashville, Tenn., that are strewn over her backyard. AP

G8 states back high-tech passport to fight terrorism

PARIS—G8 states agreed on Monday to develop a new high-tech passport to help the fight against terrorism, but Britain warned against rushing to meet a US deadline of October 2004.

The identity documents could include fingerprints and details of the bearer's iris, as well as a photograph.

G8 states Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States and Russia say the technology would make it difficult for criminals or terrorists to steal identities.

British Home Secretary David Blunkett expressed concerns, however, that trade and tourism could be affected if the project was handled badly in the haste to introduce the new passports.

Despite a deep rift over Iraq, France and the United States agreed to work together on the project, saying they would jointly chair a commission to work out the details of the chip-driven identity papers.

US Attorney General John Ashcroft attended the meeting, becoming the most senior Bush administration official to visit France since the Iraq war.

French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy said there were differences on what technique to use but said a common approach should be settled by the end of the year.

"We are all agreed that there's an urgent need to act," he said. "But we all said the same thing—let's do big scale field tests and adopt the system that is the most effective.

"Mr. Ashcroft indicated it was not a tragedy that we were not all agreed on the same technique. The main thing was that we are moving towards documents that are not easily forged. *Reuters*

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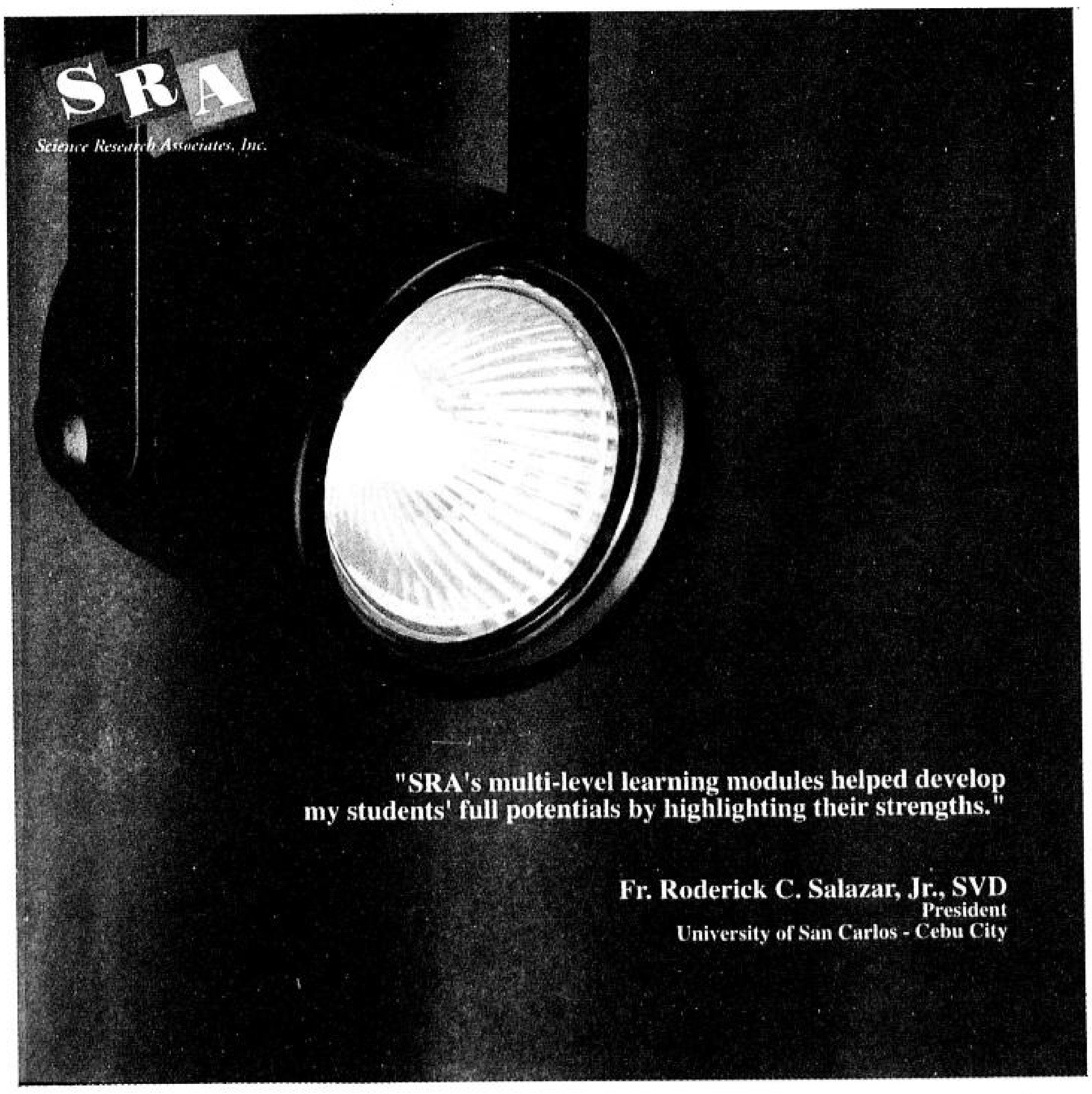

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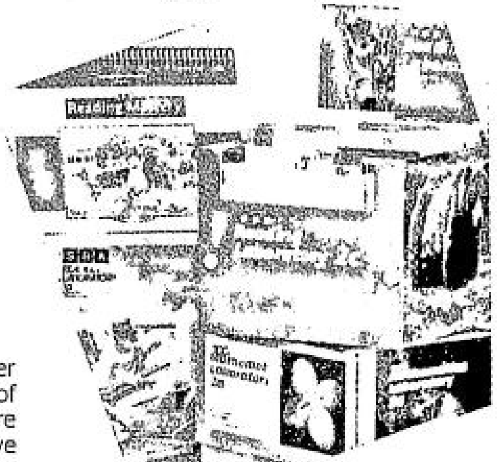

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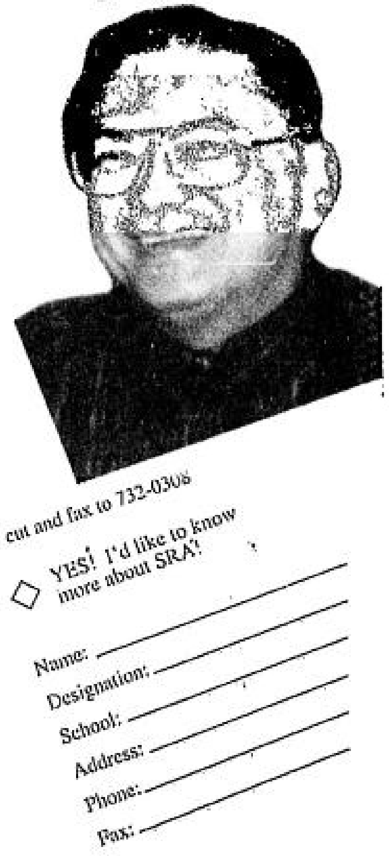

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Colombian rebels kill 10 hostages as rescue fails

BOGOTA, Colombia—Colombian Marxist rebels killed a provincial governor, a former defense minister and eight soldiers held hostage when the army botched a rescue attempt on Monday, the government and survivors said.

A rebel commander gave the order to kill Antioquia Province Gov. Guillermo Gaviria, former Defense Minister Gilberto Echeverri and the eight others as helicopter-borne troops charged into jungle-clad mountains northwest of the city of Medellin in a daylight attack, officials said.

The dead were among 80 prisoners, including soldiers, congressmen, a former presidential candidate and three US civilian Defense Department contractors, whom the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia wanted to exchange for jailed rebels.

Only three captives held in the jungle camp, all of them soldiers, survived the rescue attempt. The remaining approximately 70 hostages proposed for a prisoner swap by the rebel army known by the Spanish initials FARC are believed to be held in other parts of Colombia's inaccessible jungles.

The FARC said their captives were killed in cross-fire.

"During the confrontation between FARC guerrillas and the fascist army, Gov. Guillermo Gaviria and Gilberto Echeverri, along with other prisoners, were killed," the FARC said in an e-mailed communique.

But the government said the guerrillas fled and no shots were fired as 75 troops descended by ropes from helicopters to advance through mountainous jungle in an operation planned over days after an intelligence tip-off.

"They killed my comrades in cold blood and ran off," Sgt. Humberto Aranguren, who had been held captive in jungle jails for four years, told President Alvaro Uribe from a hospital bed, in footage broadcast on national television.

Reuters

WORLDBRIEFS

US denies shift in N. Korea policy

WASHINGTON—The United States on Monday said it had not shifted its North Korea policy, discounting a report it was now more concerned with stopping Pyongyang exporting nuclear material than on halting its weapons programs. The New York Times reported that President George W. Bush discussed such an approach with Australian Prime Minister John Howard at weekend talks at his Crawford, Texas ranch. "The President said the central worry is not what they've got, but where it goes," an unnamed administration official was quoted as saying.

AFP

Anti-apartheid hero Sisulu, 90

SISULU

JOHANNESBURG—South Africans mourned the passing of anti-apartheid hero Walter Sisulu, who died peacefully on Monday at the age of 90 in the arms of his wife. Sisulu, a veteran of the struggle against white minority rule in South Africa and long-time friend and mentor to Nelson Mandela, had suffered from Parkinson's disease. "He died in his house, peacefully... He was going to be 91 on May 18," daughter-in-law Elinor Sisulu said.

Reuters

Secret McCarthy hearings opened

WASHINGTON—Fifty years after Sen. Joseph McCarthy's scorched earth investigation into supposed communist infiltration of America's most sensitive institutions, secret transcripts released on Monday add another layer of tarnish to his place in history. The 5,000 pages from his closed-door hearings show no smoking guns, no uncovered spies, no verification of conspiracy theories on which he built his political career. "McCarthy had shopworn goods and fishing expeditions," said Don Ritchie, the Senate's associate historian who began poring over the transcripts in 1976.

Reuters

Austria's first strike in 50 years

VIENNA—Austria was bracing on Tuesday for its first general strike in more than 50 years, a protest against pension reforms sought by the ruling conservative-far-right coalition that would raise the retirement age and decrease pay-outs. The powerful National Federation of Austrian Unions (OeGB), which is close to the opposition Social Democrats, has said it hopes one million of its 1.4 million members—a quarter of the country's total workforce—will heed the strike call. The stoppage began at 5:30 a.m., leaving the capital Vienna and the key cities of Graz, Salzburg, Innsbruck and Linz without trains, buses or trams, witnesses and public radio reported.

AFP

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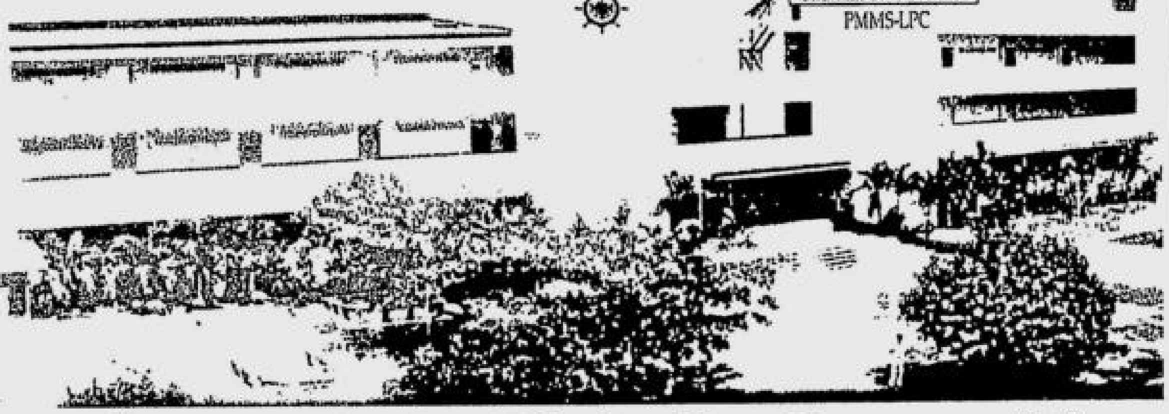

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Missing timber blamed on Alvarez man

By Floreno G. Solmirano and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—Environment Secretary Elizea Gozun has reportedly unearthed the mystery of the missing multimillion-peso worth of seized timber in northern Quezon. She pointed the responsibility to the former security officer of her predecessor Heherson Alvarez.

Five truckloads of timber disappeared after a team of Department of Environment and Natural Resources personnel from the national and local offices, conducted anti-illegal logging operations in northern Quezon for six days in November last year.

The team was headed by Captain Valentino Lopez, the former security officer of Alvarez. Provincial DENR officials and a team from the military accompanied Lopez's team during the raids.

The investigation stemmed from a provincial council resolution dated Jan. 31 submitted to the DENR assailing Quezon environment officials for the "sudden and mysterious disappearance" of thousands of board feet of illegally cut logs while in transit to the DENR central office.

The Lopez team allegedly confiscated 12 six-wheeler truckloads of timber from three warehouses and seven furniture shops in the area.

Quoting a letter-report of Gozun to Quezon Vice Gov. Jovito Talabong dated April 4, Quezon environment office head Armando Rutaquio revealed that the plan was to deposit all the seized forest products at the DENR-accredited sawmill compound of Kasibu Logging Corp. in Real for safekeeping.

Lopez, however, reportedly ordered all the seized items to be immediately brought to the DENR office in Quezon City instead.

Of the 12 truckloads, only seven were weighed with a total volume of about 13,253.70 board feet. The weighing of the remaining five truckloads was supposed to be done at the central office.

Gozun said no truckloads of seized lumber have been delivered to her office since she assumed her post on Dec. 13, 2002.

"They were apparently diverted elsewhere and could no longer be located," she said in her letter.

Gozun said Lopez was no longer connected with her department.

Lopez, however, denied that his team brought even a single board foot of lumber to the DENR office in Quezon City.

In a telephone interview, Lopez said they left the seized lumber pieces intact at the Kasibu Logging Corp. lumberyard when they returned to Manila and Rutaquio even attested to this.

Lopez, the special operations division commander then, said he was sad that he would be caught in an apparent power struggle within the DENR. But he said he was ready with all documents.

Alvarez said he did not have knowledge of what was happening at the lower levels of DENR. He advised Gozun to look deeper into the allegations, as she might have implicated innocent people in the alleged loss of a certain volume of the seized lumber.

"There are factions inside the department and intrigues are unavoidable," Alvarez said.

SARS LECTURE Concerned mothers listen intently to health officials lecturing on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome while some of their little ones doze off with little care in the world.

TOOTS SOBERANO/ PDI NORTHERN LUZON

GMA wants Cong Dadong dam completed soon

ARAYAT, Pampanga—The completion of the P4.4-billion Cong Dadong Dam here got a big boost after President Macapagal-Arroyo on Monday ordered agriculture and irrigation officials to submit detailed reports on the project's long-delayed works.

The President gave the instructions to Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. and National Irrigation Administration chief Jesus Emmanuel Paras.

She did this after Reynaldo Mencias, manager of the Pampanga Delta development project-irrigation component, presented a briefing on the accomplishments and unfinished works.

The President gave no immediate assurance of fund release, saying a review was required first. The dam is named after her father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal who approved the law creating the NIA in 1963.

She inspected the dam three months after the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) expressed alarm over the shortfall of P508 million for the project.

The government's counterpart funding landed in the "unprogrammed" items in the 2003 national budget. This could probably be the last major setback in the project that has suffered a 26-year delay due to opposition during martial law and Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991, according to Mencias.

Mitsuru Taruki, JBIC chief representative, in a letter to the National Economic and Development Authority in February, said this would "severely jeopardize" the completion of the project.

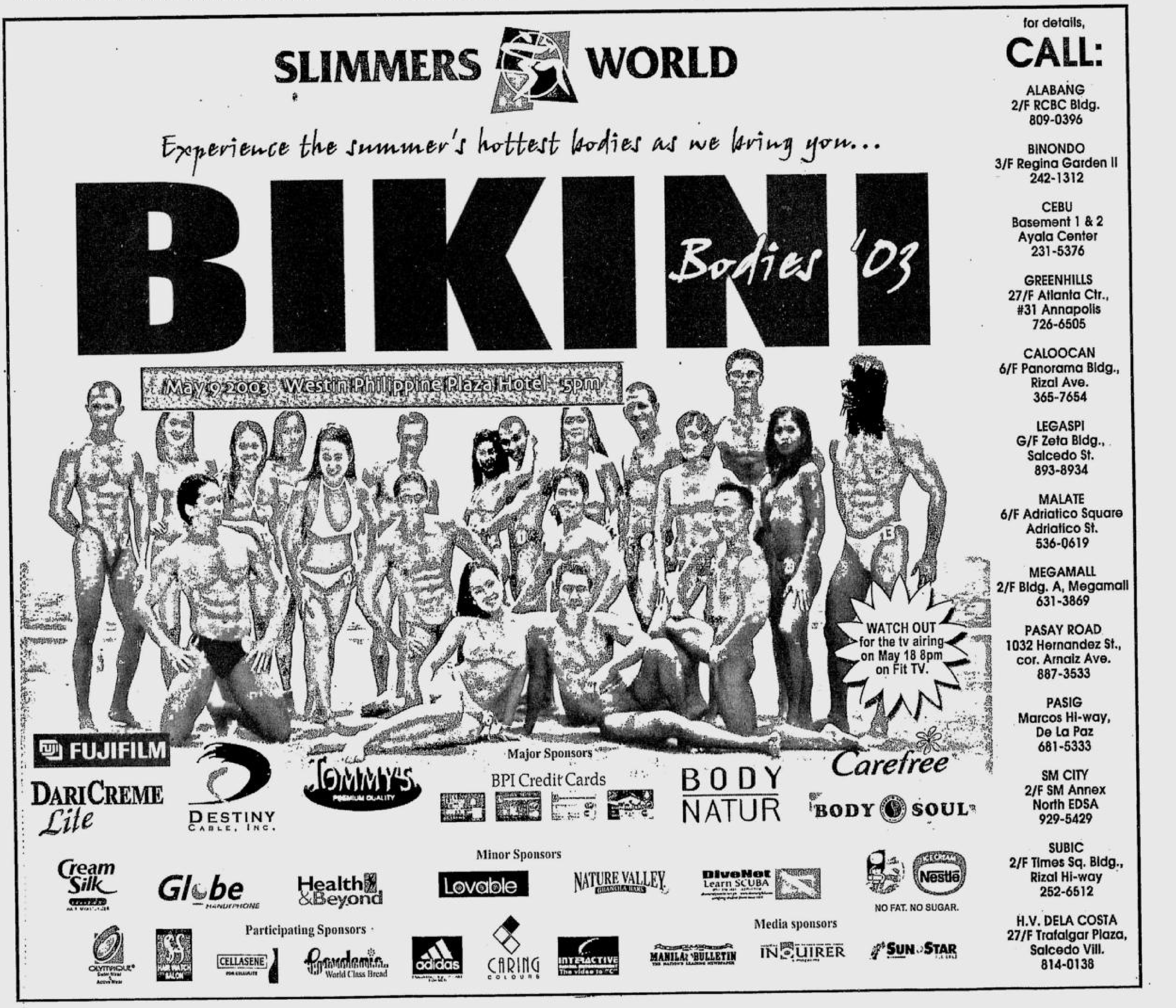
Taruki said the JBIC closed its P3.1-billion loan in October last year with the understanding that the NIA would complete the facilities through local funds.

"The main problem of the project is the shortfall of counterpart funds as brought about by the project cost overrun. It may be worthy to note that despite the purported cost overrun, the proceeds of the bank loan proved more than adequate," Taruki said.

The unfinished works, which represent 4 percent of the project's scope, are still crucial. These are uncompleted dikes and canals that are supposed to drain the water from the dam to more than 7,000 hectares of farm land or 60 percent of the project's service area.

The dam has been supplying water to only 5,600 ha in eastern Pampanga since October, Mencias said.

He said the project still owes at least 300 farmers P125.26 million in right-of-way payments.
Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk



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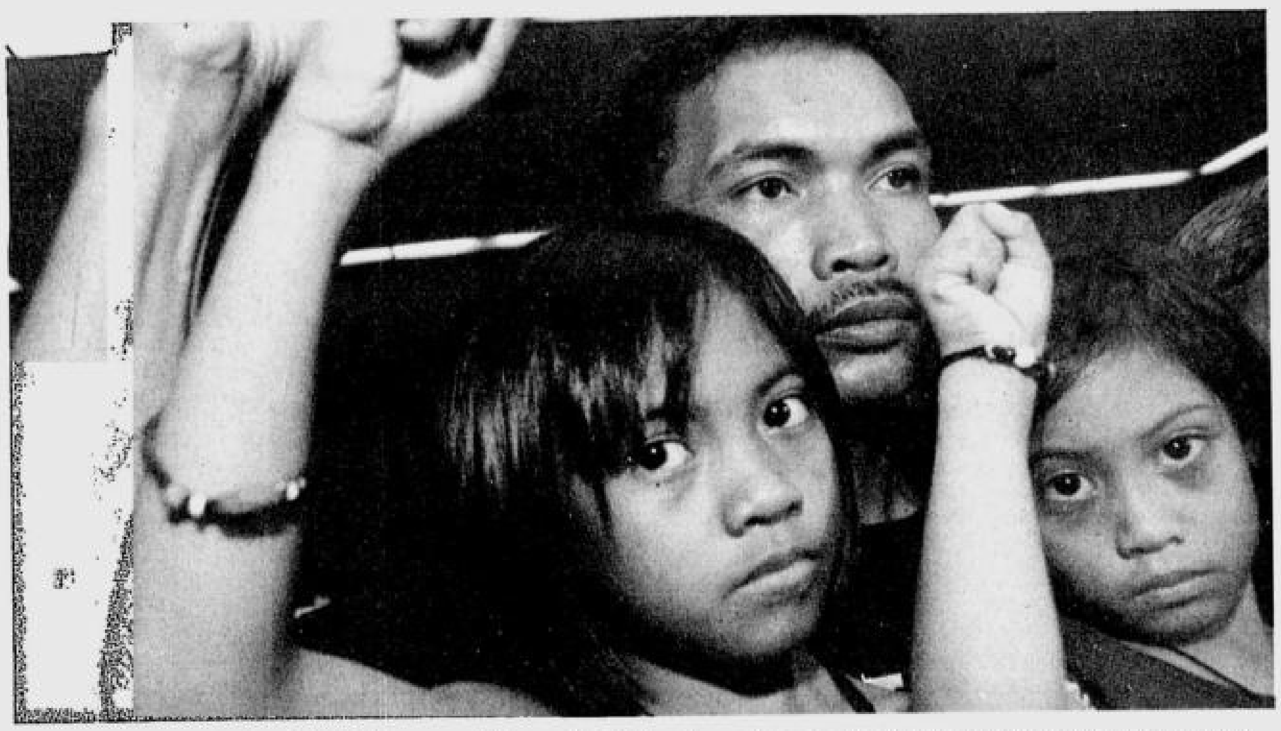

ORLY Marcellana, husband of slain human rights activist Eden Marcellana, and their two children, clench fists at the start of the House committee hearing on the Mindoro killings on Monday. JOAN BONDOC

Senate, Congress begin probe on latest Mindoro killings

By Clarice Colting
Southern Luzon Bureau

THE SENATE committee on justice and the House committee on civil, political and human rights started their inquiries this week on the brutal killings in Oriental Mindoro of human rights leader Eden Marcellana and peasant leader Eddie Gumanoy.

Irein Cuasay, secretary general of Karapatan-Oriental Mindoro, testified that she was receiving death threats from the military, during Monday's hearing by the House committee on civil, political and human rights.

She also presented the current human rights situation in Southern Tagalog as documented by Karapatan under Marcellana's term, stressing cases from Oriental Mindoro.

Cuasay said Marcellana was supposed to testify against the promotion of Col. Jovito Palparan, former commanding officer of the 204th Infantry Brigade into brigadier general.

She said this could be the possible motive for Marcellana's murder.

Virgilio Catoy II, one of the three who survived the abduction and a primary witness in the case, gave his testimony of the events that happened on April 20 before the killing of Marcellana and Gumanoy.

Christine dela Cruz, Josephine Musico and Marvin Jocson, three members of the Quick Reaction Team who were with Marcellana and Gumanoy on Black Saturday, presented to the committee the summary of facts regarding the killing of the two.

Rep. Loretta Rosales, House committee on civil, political and human rights chair, questioned the handling by the Army and the police of rebel returnees, who were pinpointed as accomplices to the human rights' violation cases.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo expressed hope that "this will be the first of a series in which the entire human rights situation in Mindoro will be exposed."

He also stressed that the military should be held liable for these cases, as they should take command responsibility for these incidents.

Commission on Human Rights' representative Commissioner Eligio Mallari said they had placed these reports in archive because no one was willing to testify.

Present during the Lower House hearing were Bayan Muna Representatives Crispin Beltran and Liza Masa, Justice Undersecretary Jose Calida, Col. Rudolfo Garcia, Armed Forces of the Philippines vice chief of staff, Supt. Voltaire Calzado, Oriental Mindoro police director, and Gov. Bart Marasigan of Oriental Mindoro.

Militant groups from Southern Tagalog, as well as friends and colleagues of Marcellana and Gumanoy, picketed outside the hearing venue in Congress. A 10-foot puppet of a skull draped in black was carried by the militants.

Mayor prefers bomb suit over dog

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. said he preferred the P1.8-million bomb suit over a P2-million bomb-sniffing dog.

Acharon has lost interest in acquiring more K-9 dogs for the city after he witnessed last week how a member of the police bomb squad wearing a bomb suit survived a blast from a two-pound bomb.

More than 20 police officers and members of the Central Mindanao Police Command attended a month-long training on bomb detection and disposal held at the police regional training center here.

Before the certificates were given to the graduates, a field demonstration was held where a member of the bomb squad wearing the bomb suit was made to stand just three meters away from a two-pound bomb. The mayor was asked to press the remote control to explode the bomb.

The actual bomb explosion was made to show to the graduates the reliability of the bomb suit.

The mayor, who just arrived here after attending a two-day antiterrorism seminar in Manila, said a bomb suit is cheaper compared to a K-9 dog.

Each bomb-sniffing dog costs around P2 million. This does not include the daily cost in maintaining it.
Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

CHARTER CHANGE

Barangay league wants another year for local elective officials

CEBU CITY—The Liga ng mga Barangay sa Pilipinas is starting a people's initiative to change the provision of the 1987 Constitution that will add one more year to the term of office of local elective officials.

Liga president Marty Lim said they will gather seven million signatures starting June.

With a one-year extension in office, he said the government can save on election expenses considering that the country holds elections for different elective offices every year.

He pointed out that there will be a local and national election in 2004, barangay elections in 2005, and another local and senatorial elections in 2007.

The seven million signatures are required by the Commission on Elections to call for a plebiscite. The number represents 12 percent of the country's total voting population.

Lim said he will launch the gathering of signatures in May but there will be an initial launching in some barangay chapters this month.

The Liga is now processing the completion of forms that will be distributed among barangays to be filled up for the gathering of signatures.

Lim said their target was for the plebiscite to be held together with the 2004 elections in May.

The proposal to extend the term of office will only be for House representatives, governors, mayors, councilors and barangay captains.

The Liga's proposal excludes the terms of office of national posts so as not to make the issue too complicated that will entail a lot of debates, he added.

Under the Constitution, elected local officials have a three-year term of office and are allowed two more reelections.

Another advantage of a four-year term is that no local candidates will "ride on" to national political figures or vice versa during the campaign.

If the presidential elections are independently held, he added the voters will have a clearer picture who to support based on qualifications.
Kathy I. Navarro, PDI Visayas Bureau

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The blessings of Buguey's 'crab mentality'

By Melvin Gascon
Buguey, Cagayan

IT WOULD not be a surprise for any stranger to find out just how the people of Buguey, Cagayan, possess a "crab mentality." They don't take it as an offense, though. The affliction is quite literal—they have actually fallen for the juicy crustacean.

The coastal town of Buguey, located at the northern tip of Luzon, is home to the country's biggest and best-tasting crabs. Because of this, the town has earned the title of "Crab Capital of the Philippines."

"No other place in the country would match Bugueyanos' passion for the growing of crabs," says 32-year-old Mayor Lloyd Antiporda.

Seven of 10 families in Buguey know by heart the art and science of crab growing—from nurturing days-old crablets (baby crabs or "crablings") to grappling with fully-grown crabs as these are taken out of a *tallakeb* (spherical crab trap made of woven bamboo strips).

But how do Bugueyanos take their association with this menacing creature that is often perceived as having a nasty look, a cranky behavior and a weird sideways gait?

"Those characteristics seem to have been forgotten here. Our people look at the crab as a symbol of our toughness, our determination to fight the odds of life. We see it as a thing of beauty and grace," says Antiporda.

"Crab mentality" takes on a new meaning for the Bugueyanos. They do not buy the traditional negative connotation that crabs, when placed in a pan, tend to pull one another down as they try to reach the top, Antiporda says.

Cooperation, unity

Instead, they say, crab mentality should connote cooperation and unity. In a literal sense, crabs, in a similar situation, get on top of one another to form a makeshift ladder to help them reach the brim.

And that is actually happening now, according to Antiporda. Residents have long been sharing the town's lagoon area, and have forged virtual partnerships in their crab growing and trade for years.

The local government, on the other hand, uses some of its funds to buy crablets to protect local growers from prices dictated by commercial traders.

A crablet, with a body of an infant's palm that is bought at P4 today and grown in six weeks, would later be sold in the market for P400. If a farmer releases a minimum of 100 crablets in a pond, and through regular feeding, he can earn P40,000 in no time.

The crab trade has become an ample source of livelihood for many Buguey folk, and a very lucrative venture for others.

The confluence of the salty water from the South China Sea and the fresh water of the Buguey River make up the brackish water of the town's lagoon.

The lagoon has an estimated area of 40,000 hectares and stretches 14 kilometers eastward to Buguey's border with Santa Teresita town.

With its placid waters, the lagoon is lined with mangrove and *nipa* (palm) trees on its banks, the most ideal habitat for crabs. It also hosts scores of fish cages used for *bangus* (milkfish) production.

Though the crab business in Buguey started to flourish in the late 1970s and early 1980s, very little has changed in the way Bugueyanos trade their produce.

Antiporda says farmers still transport and sell crablets to other growers in Central Luzon and grow them only for the consumption of residents of Buguey and nearby towns.

Crab traders make an average profit of up to P150,000 for every shipment of crablets to outlets in Pampanga. These buyers, in turn, sell the fully-grown crabs to first-class hotels and restaurants in Metro Manila.

"I look forward to the day when Buguey would become the trading center for crabs, both in the international and domestic markets, so that our people would no longer need to ship out their products; instead, buyers would come to us," Antiporda says.

Crab festival

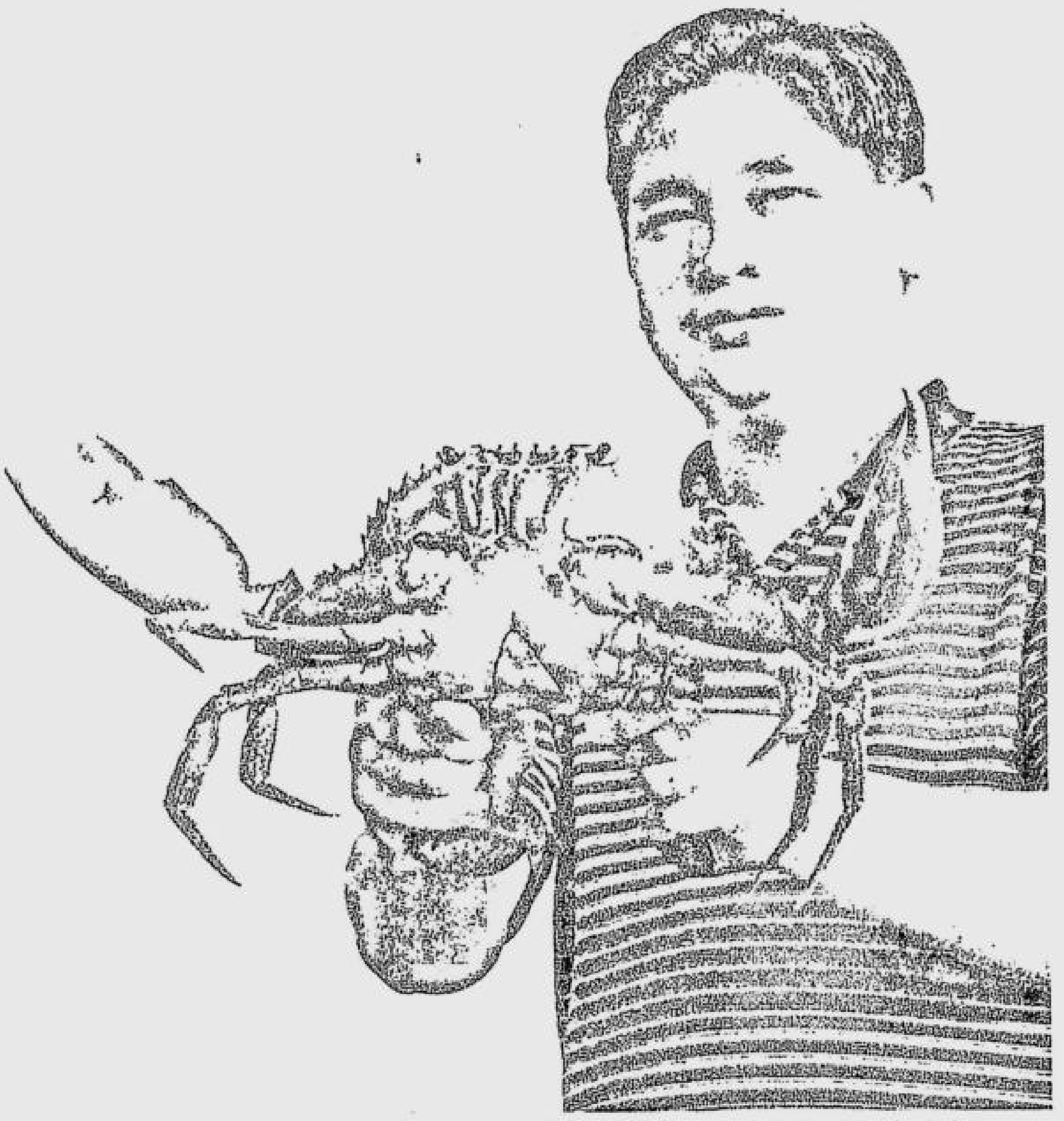
On May 14 to 20, Buguey's king crab takes center stage when the town celebrates "Parabur 2003," its first crab festival.

Highlights of the festival are the search for the largest and heaviest king crabs, the crab race and other contests that include tying-up-the-crab, crab trapping and *tallakeb* weaving.

But the festival is not all about crabs, Antiporda says. It will also feature practically all the bounty of marine life that the people of Buguey derive from the lagoon and the sea.

Among other favorite and abundant delicacies in the town are lobsters, *padaw* (prawns) and *purong* (shrimps), the mouth-watering *caribuyo* (clam) soups, and a myriad of recipes from various fish species, including *malaga*, *caballes*, *balaki*, *bingalo* and *darioay*.

"Buguey celebrates 'Parabur' (blessings) with a sense of advocacy to remind people of their responsibility in the sustainable use of our marine resources. We think of this as the best way for us to thank the Lord for the graces He has given us," Antiporda says.



BUGUEY Mayor Lloyd Antiporda leads his people's multi-pronged approach to progress through aquaculture and eco-tourism, with the king crab as its centerpiece. MELVIN C. GASCON

Sagada weavers feel the economic crunch

By Desiree Caluza
Sagada, Mt. Province

EVEN in the resort town of Sagada in Mt. Province where more than 9,000 tourists flock every year, the local weaving industry has felt the negative impact of globalization.

"We are now starting to feel the sentiments of Benguet farmers when imported vegetables displaced local vegetables. Weavers like us are now apprehensive that our target market is decreasing because they now patronize imported woven products," Rhoda Bondad, owner of Sagada Weaving Shop here, told the INQUIRER.

"It's the crunch that we all feel, it's so hard," she lamented.

Bondad said with the advent of globalization, woven products from China, Pakistan and Thailand have started to flood the local market. These are cheaper than local products because labor cost in those countries is low.

"Before, tourists visit our shops to buy the products. Now, they just come and look," Bondad said.

Sagada Weaving is the first and the oldest local weaving shop in Sagada. It is patronized by tourists and residents alike.

The shop has been considered an institution in Sagada since it was established in 1968 because its products, such as the *tapis* (native skirt), g-string, blanket and bags, are synonymous to quality and fine craftsmanship.

The shop is one of the top tourist destinations in Sagada, aside from the magnificent caves, falls, hanging coffins and coffee shops.

Sagada Weaving has employed mostly women from Sagada, many of whom were trained by the Bondad family.

The family made it a point to train and employ local women who are either widows or single mothers.

From five weavers, the shop now employs 35 weavers who are from Sagada and Sadanga towns.

Bondad said they never entertained the idea of closing the shop, but it might reach that point if the economic crisis continues.

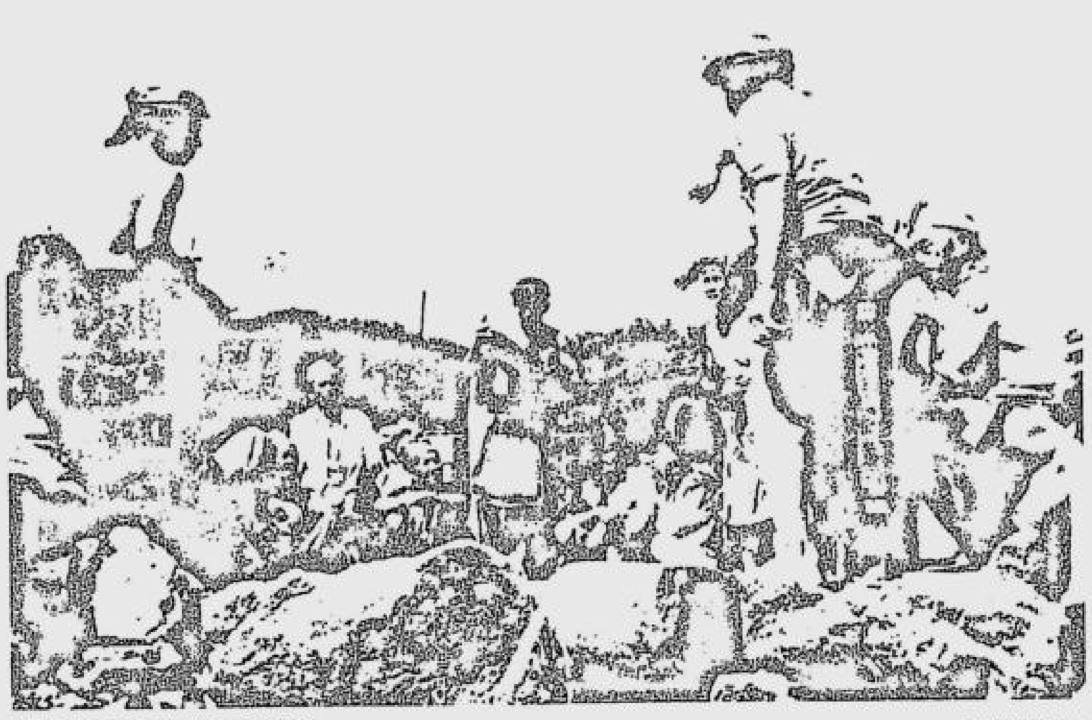
"But if this crunch continues, I might close the shop and just tend a *sari-sari* (variety) store. But my worry is I have 35 people who depend on the shop and I feel that I have a moral obligation to keep them. If I were only thinking of myself, I would have closed it three years ago," Bondad said.

But it is not only Sagada's weaving industry that has been affected by globalization.

The Sagada orange, one of the town's original products, was the first to be affected by the worldwide open market.

"We used to raise good oranges but now, the market is flooded with cheap oranges from China. Even if we sell our produce, we do not know if we can get a good return on investment," said Mayor Thomas Killip.

He said local woven products are likely affected because of the entry of cheap handicraft from South America and South Africa.



'BEGNAS' IN SAGADA TOMMY HAFALLA

Baguio-based artist Tommy Hafalla opens his 12th solo exhibition of photographs titled "Begnas (id Malingeb)" on May 10 at the Yoghurt House in Sagada, Mt. Province. The exhibit is a collection of 26 photographs on the *begnas*, a rice ritual in the tourist resort town of Sagada. Hafalla was named by the Cultural Center of the Philippines as one of the 13 outstanding artists in 1992.

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US may declare MILF a terror group–Ricciardone

From page A1

classifying the MILF as a terrorist group, and said it was time for the Moro secessionist group to finally decide whether it was for peace or not.

"That certainly is the issue under consideration now for several years. It is up to the MILF to decide really what they're going to be, who they are and make that very clear," Ricciardone said, during a lull in a live-ammunition exercise by Philippine and US troops.

"I think it's safe to say that if they continue with acts of terrorism, everybody in the world will consider them terrorists," he said.

Last year, the US state department tagged the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army, the Abu Sayyaf bandit group and the Pentagon kidnapping gang as terrorist organizations, in a bid to freeze suspected foreign assets and dry up foreign funding.

To pursue the MILF rebels behind the raid on Siocon town, Zamboanga del Norte, the military has dispatched special troops, including Scout Rangers.

"We are shifting from the active defense mode into punitive mode against the MILF," AFP Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, who is also the current spokesperson, said in Camp Aguinaldo.

Running gun battles continued to take place yesterday near Siocon, and the military said the death toll had risen to 36 as of yesterday afternoon.

A report prepared by the Army's 44th Infantry Battalion said that since Sunday, five soldiers, six policemen, 14 rebels and 11 civilians, including a 16-year-old boy beheaded by the rebels, had been killed.

The number of injured victims also increased to 34; 19 civilians, 9 Army soldiers and six policemen.

No peace talks

The President vowed to "deploy all the lawful instruments of the state to end this conflict and bring peace to the homes of our people."

"We shall pursue peace only under the rule of law and constitutional order," she said.

Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza, the government's chief negotiator with the MILF, said the time was no longer ripe for talking peace.

"We have been walking an extra mile to reach something, but this time, the climate is not conducive for peace talks or exploratory talks," Dureza told the INQUIRER before flying to Siocon.

But Fr. Eduardo Layan, a parish priest in Siocon, said the scrapping was a mistake. "This will only result (in) more bloodshed and more people will be affected," Layan told the INQUIRER after meeting with Dureza and Philippine National Police chief Hermogenes Ebdane.

He said the Moro rebellion could not be resolved by military action.

"I know how the people of Siocon feel, but this is not the solution," Layan said.

Siocon Mayor Cesar Soriano said what the MILF did was a plain act of terrorism and that it was only proper the perpetrators of the raid are punished.

"The government did the next best thing. I support the temporary cancellation of the talks. I think it is but proper for the talks to be cancelled," Soriano said.

The Americans, the country's closest military ally, questioned recent actions by MILF rebels. "If they don't choose peace, if they continue kidnapping people and blowing up buildings, that's terrorism. What you're seeing here is the US training with your soldiers to help your soldiers become more effective in dealing with terrorism," Ricciardone said.

"What we can do is to help our allies become stronger in dealing with these terrible people."

"If the MILF chooses to have peace in these areas, we'll see what we can do (with US aid)," Ricciardone said. But "it's ridiculous for us to try bringing electricity to the villages if the MILF is going to be blowing up electric pylons. We can't do that," he said.

Garcia said the pursuit operations were being conducted in the towns of Siocon and Sirawai, near the boundaries of Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur and Sibugay provinces.

"We are not about to set Mindanao on fire. That is not how it is going to be. It is going to be a selective, punitive operation," Garcia said.

He also said that a study group had been formed to review the possibility of declaring the MILF a terrorist organization.

Garcia said the retreating MILF rebels picked up more hostages as they withdrew.

The other night, 36 hostages were released. At noon yesterday, the military said eight hostages remained in MILF hands. Later, Soriano said seven of the eight civilians taken as hostages during the raid had been freed.

Soriano said the rebels had been holed up in the mountains of Sirawai and Sibuco, the same area where former Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Sabaya, then tagging American missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham, had sought refuge to evade the military.

The attack on Siocon also gave more credence to the military's claim that the MILF had been violating international laws by using minors.

Soriano said based on accounts of witnesses, the Siocon raiders were mostly young boys and girls. "Majority of the attackers were aged 15, 16 and 17," Soriano said.

Layan said he himself saw some of the raiders. "I even saw them trying to reload magazines. It seems they were not trained well. Older rebels were even coaching them. What was disturbing however was that it looked like they were excited at what they were doing," Layan said. *With reports from Martin Marfil; Lullie A. Micabalo and Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Reuters, AFP, AP; Christine Avendaño*

Moro rebs hit 5 towns in 3 days

From page A1

chief of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said soldiers recovered three assault rifles, ammunition and a hand-held radio from the slain rebels, whom he described as young and school-aged boys.

On Monday night, rebels reportedly fired on a house in Barangay Sta. Cruz in Maigo, Lanao del Norte, killing a 6-year-old girl, identified as Normandia Abantas.

The girl's parents, Sonny and Concordia, suffered serious gunshot wounds and were rushed to the Maigo community hospital.

Sonny said a Commander Yahya Lacsadatu Khan of the MILF's 5th Bangsa Moro Islamic Armed Forces led the rebels.

Simbajon said the rebels were sore at Sonny after he refused to join them during the Maigo raid on April 24, where at least 16 civilians died.

That same night in Pikit, North Cotabato, six civilians, including a minor, were hurt when suspected MILF rebels fired an M-79 grenade into the roof of an evacuation center managed by the Catholic Church.

Insp. Glicerio Ragodos, Pikit police chief, said the rifle grenade attack, the second this week, also set off a panic among some 500 evacuees.

Yesterday morning, MILF rebels attacked a Muslim village in Parang, Maguindanao, and torched six houses after carting away five work animals.

Senga said the rebels, numbering about 50, stormed the village of Gadungan by firing rocket-propelled grenades. None of the residents were hit in the attack.

"They are desperate enough that they no longer spare even Muslim civilians," Senga told reporters.

Soldiers pursuing MILF rebels in Munai town, Lanao del Norte, recovered the cadavers of three of the four missing soldiers in the April 29 encounter in Barangay Pangao. The fourth soldier was found alive, said Maj. Gen. Cristolito Balaoing, commander of the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City.

Balaoing said the bodies of Cpl. Simplicio de la Cruz Jr., Pfc. Anik Asnar and Pfc. Edwin Amik were found in a forested area, while Cpl. Disodado Baes survived after residents found him walking through the forest.

Also, an accident involving a military truck loaded with ammunition killed at least three Marine soldiers in Pikit on Monday. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Rosa-May V. de Guzman and Jeffrey P. Maningo, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Martin Marfil*

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Gov't to operate Naia 3 passenger terminal

From page A1

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Business sharply divided . . .

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3 tenors concert a terror hit

From page A1

to militant groups, who protested the staging of the show. They cited Reyes' hawkish stance on Mindanao, Fernando's harsh eviction of Manila's sidewalk vendors and presumably Lina's inability to restore peace and order in the country's conflicted areas.

To their credit, the tenors proved the protesters wrong—on stage at least. The night belonged to them as they soared on wings of song as though all was right with the country.

"I hope our next concert would be for the benefit of the Armed Forces (of the Philippines)," Reyes said right after the threesome's opening number.

"Salute!" was a fundraiser to benefit the Free Legal Assistance for Good Cops Foundation which will fund the defense of policemen with cases in court.

Lina best singer

Lina, the best singer among the three, sang like a professional with the voice, showmanship and suave presence of a seasoned performer. He even maintained eye contact with his audience.

Reyes' version of the Elvis Presley original "Wooden Heart" was the most applauded. The general kept the audience pumped up with some choreographed dance steps with the Hotlegs dancers.

Though Fernando would often be caught looking at the teleprompter, he has the potential to be a good host, what with his witty remarks and deadpan expression.

"A lot of friends bought tickets," he quipped. "But I don't think we'll still have them as friends after this concert."

Months of hard work

"What you are about to watch is the culmination of months of hard work," the show's producer Beth Sison-Tagle told the audience. The concert, originally scheduled in March, was postponed due to the start of the US strike on Iraq.

The two-hour show directed by Angie Magbanua was divided into four parts. It opened with the trio singing "Tonight," a song from the Broadway musical "West Side Story." What followed were tunes from the '60s like "Don't Forget To Remember Me," "Impossible Dream," and The Carpenters' "Sing," which Fernando sang with daughter Tala and guest artist Dulce.

The Jerry Matias band backed up the trio.

Dulce sang about 20 songs. While the trio only had four major costume changes, Dulce slipped into a new gown before every song number.

Repertoire

The evening's repertoire was a nostalgic flashback to the performers' generation—mostly standard classics from the '60s and '70s.

The Josh Groban hit "The Prayer," which the Lina family sang toward the end of the show, was the only contemporary piece of the evening. The rest were pop classics and songs that the current generation would only hear in videokes.

The third part of the show featured romantic Filipino love songs like "Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas," "Anak Dalita" and "Gaano Ko Ikaw Kamahal."

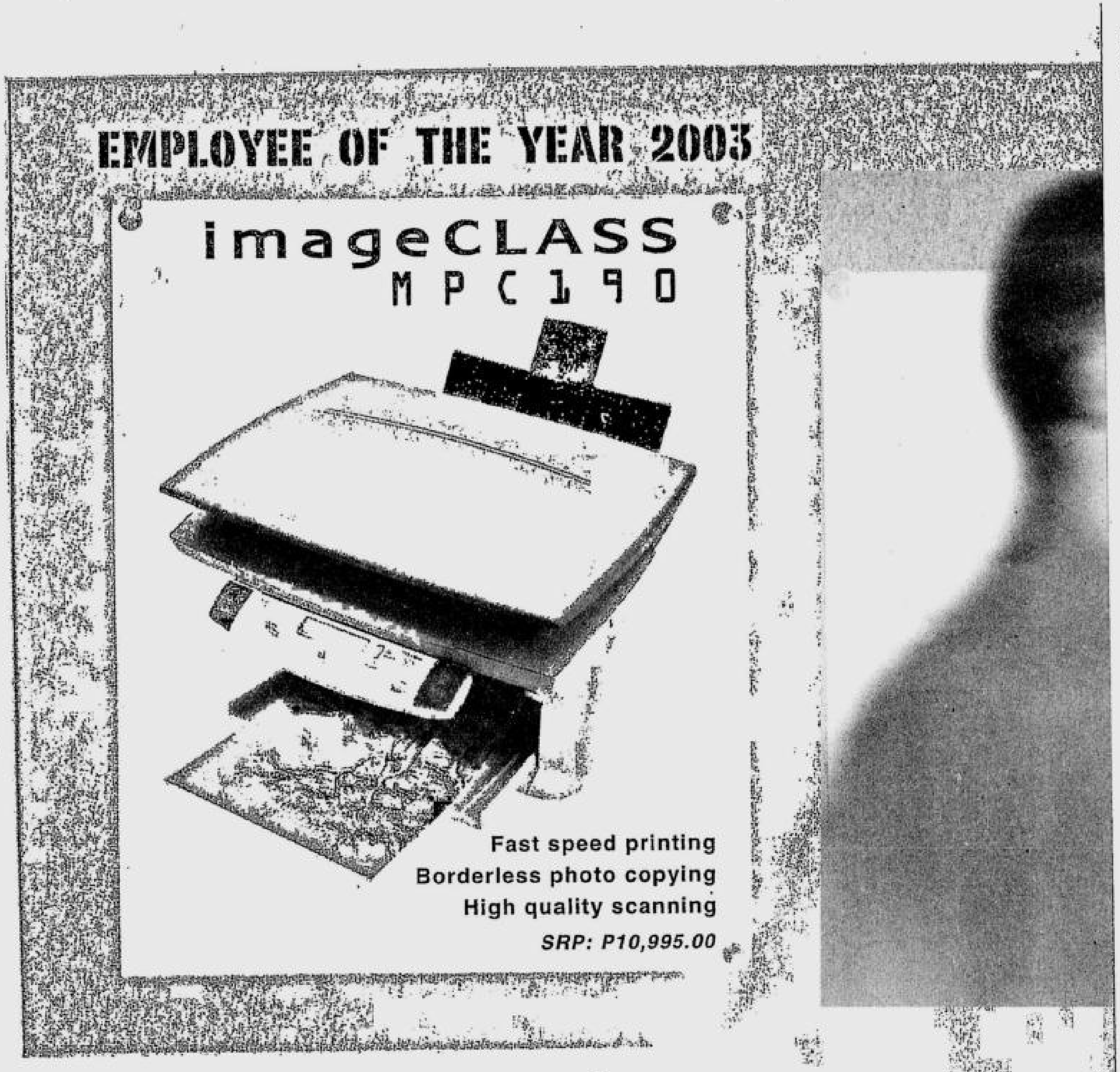
Reyes sang "Usahay" with wife Tessie; Lina dueted "Ikaw Lamang" with wife Lory.

IMELDIFIC is spotted in the audience of VIPs at the Manila Hotel, during the concert which is the highlight so far this year of the social season. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando, the MMDA chief's wife, was probably the most attentive spectator in the audience. Marides did not sing with her husband but went up the stage to join him and Tala for the encore.

President Macapagal arrived at 11:45 p.m., or halfway through the third part of the show. She was escorted by Lina on stage and joined the trio in singing the encore, "Ako ay Pilipino."

Members of the Armed Forces, who came in full support of Reyes, were led by Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr.



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Salamat …

From page A1

"I cannot answer that question right now but I believe they are just around," Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga, 6th Infantry Division chief, told the INQUIRER.

Ermita, the presidential adviser for the peace process, said the reward money was meant to bring about the MILF leaders' "neutralization."

Asked in a media briefing if this meant Salamat and MILF leaders were to be brought in dead or alive, Ermita said: "Yes, you can say that."

"When reward is offered … if they engage our forces in combat, they could be killed if they fight back," Ermita said.

Of the P50 million, P5 million each have been set aside for the capture of Salamat; vice chairs Jaafar and Al Haj Murad; spokesperson Eid Kabalu; and Ali Mimbantas.

"We are not expecting any contact between our (peace) panels," Ermita said, anticipating the MILF's reaction to the placing of a bounty on rebel leaders.

If the MILF persists in attacking civilian communities, the government may just declare them as a terrorist group, he said.

"It can very well lead to that," Ermita said. "It will not be far from now."

Two theories

There are two theories about Salamat's whereabouts.

The first holds that he disappeared into the countryside at about the time the Armed Forces launched its Buliok Complex offensive last February.

The second holds that Salamat left the country through the "back door" using a "*kumpit*" (fast watercraft) a few days before the Buliok campaign.

These bits of information were disclosed to the INQUIRER by an MILF insider who asked not to be named for security reasons.

The source said the reason police and military authorities were finding it difficult to arrest Salamat and other members of the MILF Central Committee "is because of the support of some government officials and local government units to the MILF cause."

In 1988, according to the source, Murad was arrested along with his men by Army soldiers manning a military checkpoint somewhere in Lanao del Sur. But he was immediately released unharmed through the intercession of a Philippine Constabulary general.

No reason was given for the group's release.

Not hiding

"We are not hiding, *nag-iingat lang* (we are just being cautious)," said Kabalu.

"Sometimes our mobile phones are on, sometimes (they're) not," said Mohaqher Iqbal, MILF information chief. "We are careful because satellites can easily detect and locate fugitives."

Jaafar said all the MILF ranking officials and commanders were in the country.

"We did not hide abroad, we are Mindanaoans and we will stay here," he said.

"We have been expecting these things to happen because we are revolutionaries," he said of the reward money and warrants.

When asked whether the concerned MILF leaders would still grant face-to-face interviews, especially for TV cameramen and photojournalists, Jaafar said: "It depends on the situation."

"When I say this I mean we are still open to interviews because we believe in the freedom of the press and the right of the people to be informed," he said.

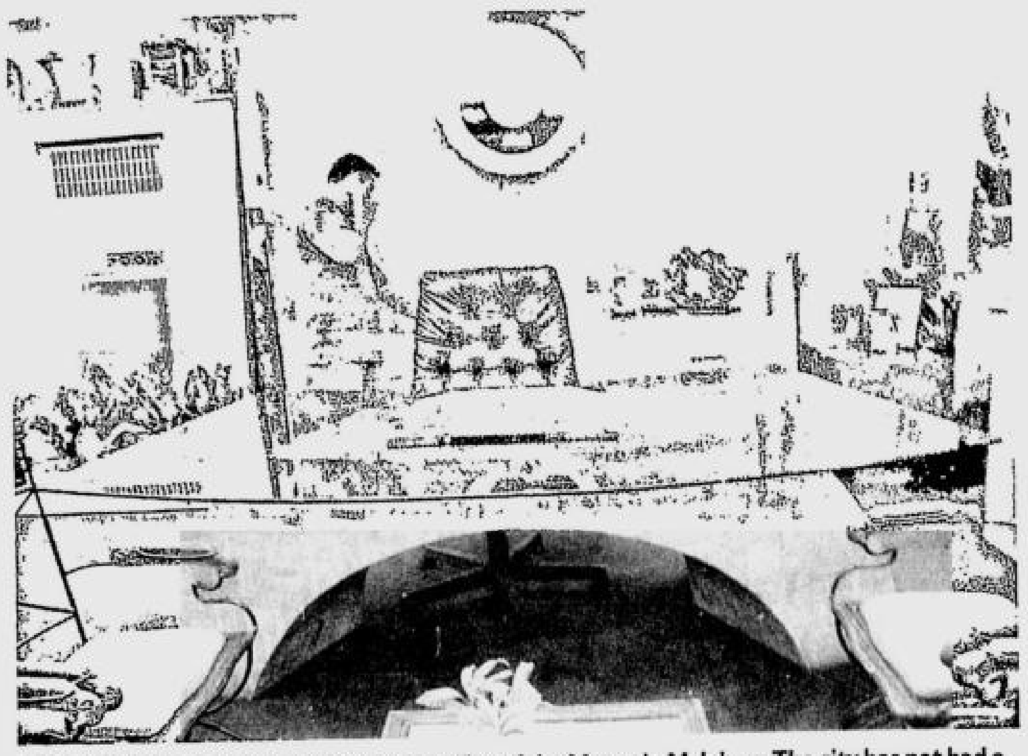
Reached through his mobile phone, Murad said the MILF leaders had been in touch with each other even if they don't sit down for a meeting.

According to Jaafar, Salamat is just "11 digits away" (mobile phone number) and the other MILF leaders are in close contact with him.

"He is in Mindanao," Jaafar said, but added that he has not met the MILF chieftain since the fall of Buliok.

This is not the first time a bounty has been offered for their heads. The Estrada administration put up P5 million for Salamat's head, P4 million for Murad and P1 million each for Jaafar and Kabalu.

They were charged with multiple-murder and frustrated multiple-murder after MILF guerrillas attacked civilian communities in Central Mindanao.



AN EMPTY chair greets visitors to the Office of the Mayor in Malabon. The city has not had a functioning mayor for nearly two weeks. The mayor, Amado Vicencio, is locked in a bitter feud with the vice mayor, Mark Allan Jay Yambao. JOAN BONDOC

Marquez to auction off ex-mayor's property

By Christian Esguerra

PARAÑAQUE Mayor Joey Marquez has placed on the auction block several assets of his political rival Pablo Olivarez for allegedly failing to pay around P41.5 million in realty taxes.

Olivarez, whom Marquez defeated in the 1995 polls, allegedly has been evading tax payments since he was elected mayor of Parañaque in 1992, said city legal counsel Leo Luis Mendoza.

The pieces of property, which include a general hospital, cinema, and warehouse, were supposed to be auctioned off at 9 a.m. today.

But Olivarez has secured a court order, preventing the city government from proceeding with the auction. The order was issued by the Supreme Court on April 30.

"Justice was served by the Supreme Court," the ex-mayor yesterday told the INQUIRER. "Clearly, the auction is 100-percent politically motivated."

Olivarez alleged that the auction was meant to derail his candidacy in next year's election.

He is expected to run against incumbent Vice Mayor Jun Bernabe and actress Alma Moreno, estranged wife of Marquez.

Marquez, who is serving his third and last term, is reportedly eyeing a congressional seat.

Olivarez also contested the amount of his tax liability. He said it should have amounted to only around P10 million—not P41.5 million—and blamed the city assessor for padding the figures.

Marquez, he added, denied him the opportunity to avail of a 25-percent discount in his land taxes.

Mendoza dismissed Olivarez's allegations and insisted that the auction was Marquez's "earnest effort" to go after tax delinquents.

The city auctioned off Naia for P655 million last February, and parts of the PEA-managed President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard last month for a P267-million tax liability.

Palace to resolve crisis in Malabon; Yambao faces raps

By Tina Santos

THE CRISIS in Malabon appears to be far from over.

Although the Department of Interior and Local Government yesterday assured Malabon City residents that all would be well soon, Mayor Amado Vicencio at the same time threatened to file charges against Vice Mayor Mark Allan Jay Yambao.

Yesterday, DILG Secretary Joey Lina assured residents that Malacañang officials would soon settle the leadership issue in Malabon. He said Malacañang is set to make the announcement today.

"Definitely the issue would be resolved, but it's not for me to say," Lina said. "Malacañang will announce the decision."

Malabon City Public Information Officer Gerry Gonzalez said that Vicencio's legal advisers are now mulling over the filing of contempt of court charges against Yambao.

Vicencio, who had been ordered suspended for allegedly engaging in anomalous activities, last week received a reprieve from the Court Appeals. The court granted the mayor a temporary restraining order lifting the suspension. Vicencio's advisers said Yambao has defied the court order by staying put as the city's acting mayor.

But according to Yambao, he could only step down on orders of the DILG.

Meanwhile, 15 Metro Manila mayors have thrown their support behind Vicencio.

In an open letter to the President, the mayors presented a detailed argument why Vicencio should not be suspended "on the basis of unfounded allegations hurled against him by his political detractors."

METROBRIEFS

Furor over elder's death

MANILA Councilor Isko Moreno yesterday called on his colleagues not to turn the death of a Tondo barangay elder into a political circus. Moreno said the story about the death of Barangay 54 Chair Eugenio Maningas has been distorted to make it appear that the councilor directly caused Maningas' death. On Saturday night, Moreno and Maningas were reported to be arguing over where to put up a stage to mark the feast of Sta. Monica in Manila when the barangay official had a heart attack. Moreno denied he had argued with Maningas. The council is set to conduct an inquiry on the incident. *Jerome Aning*

No water in Novaliches

PARTS of Novaliches, Quezon City will have no water for 4 hours on May 8 starting at 12:01 a.m. until 4 a.m. Maynilad Water said the service interruption will give way to the dewatering of a 600-mm diameter pipe at Patnubay Street corner Susano Road, Novaliches. Areas to be affected are Nagkaisang Nayon, Capri, and San Agustin, and Novaliches-Bayan and a portion of Barangay Sta. Monica.

Waylaid in Sta. Ana

MANOLITO Manago, 20, met his killers while he was with his six friends on board a tricycle in Manila yesterday. Several men armed with a homemade shotgun and a pistol, blocked the path of the tricycle at around 1 a.m. at the corner of Estrada and Pasig Line streets in Sta. Ana, police said. When Manago learned that the men were looking for him, he got off the vehicle and fled. The suspects cornered Manago after a brief chase and shot him. Manago died at the Ospital ng Maynila, police said. *Philip Tubeza, Lourdes Valerie Handumon*

Loan leads to stabbing

CONSTRUCTION worker Rico Bonjoc, 42, only wanted to help a co-worker who needed a loan of P30. But when he asked suspect Badjao dela Cruz what the money was for, Bonjoc was stabbed three times. PO1 Jason David said Dela Cruz was drunk when he asked Bonjoc for money last Saturday night at a construction site in Barangay Palanan, Makati. The suspect escaped while Bonjoc was taken to the Pasay City General Hospital for treatment. *Jamie Alarcon*

Boy, 12, kills playmate

A 12-YEAR-OLD boy stabbed and killed his playmate, Oliver P. Bandong, 14, when the victim refused to share a basketball in Manila on Sunday. Police said that the suspect, a Grade 5 student, got more furious when he was hit by a cab after Bandong pushed him in the middle of Maria Clara Street in Sampaloc, Manila. The suspect went to his house, came back with a dagger and stabbed Bandong in the chest. The boy has been charged with homicide before the Manila Prosecutor's Office. *Philip Tubeza*

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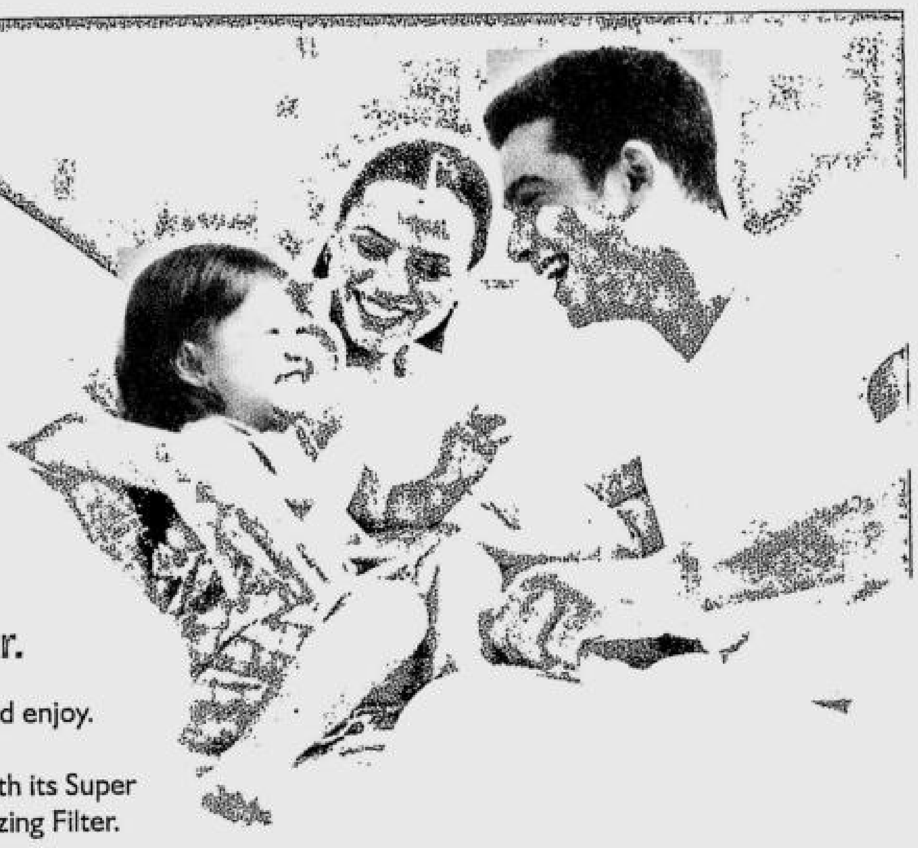

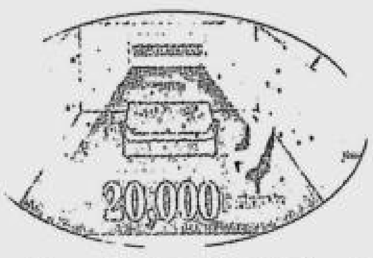

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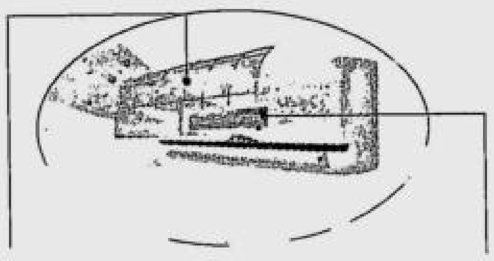

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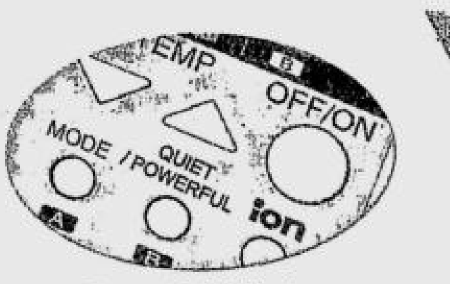

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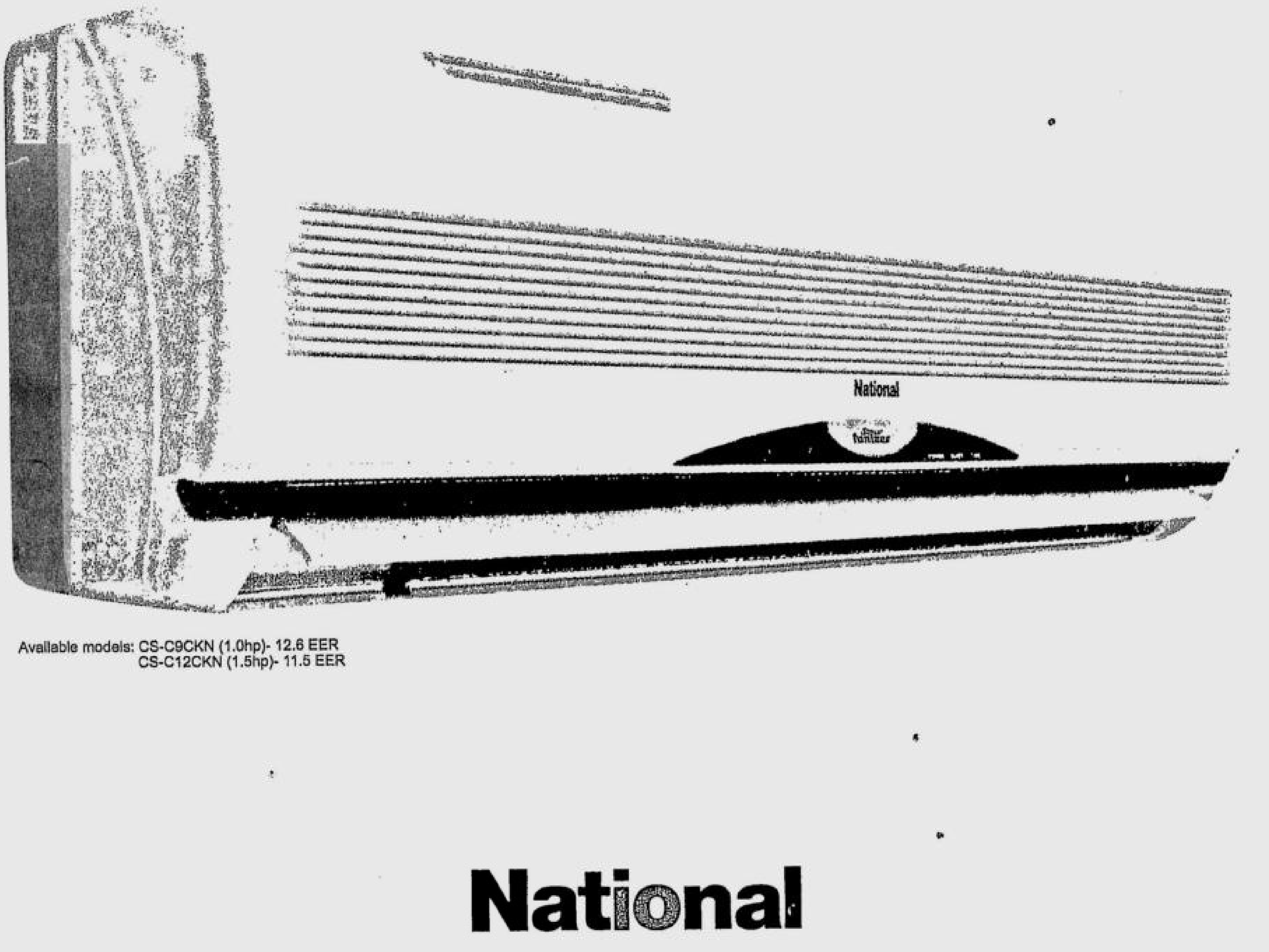

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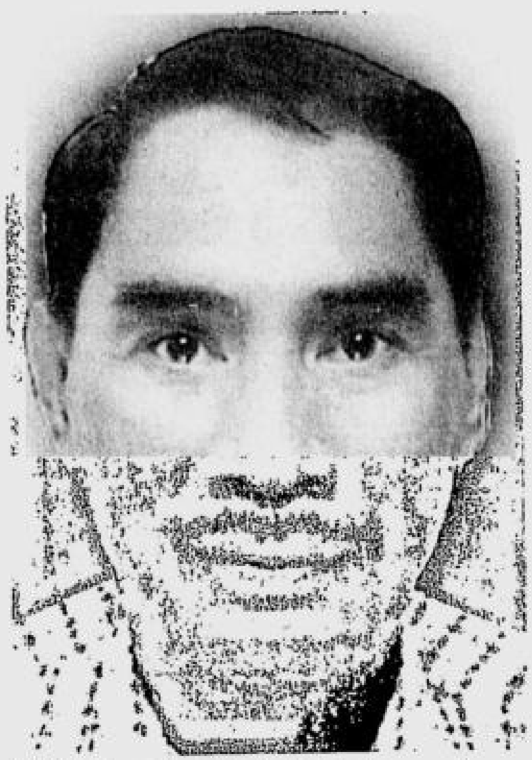
Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

Baron slay suspect undergoes make-over



THIS is how Camacho looked then...

...AND how he allegedly looks now.

By Christian V. Esguerra

A PRIMARY suspect in the killing of former government informant Baron Cervantes has allegedly just gotten a make-over.

A slimmer and newly shaved Santiago "Sonny" Camacho continues to evade a massive police hunt, more than two years after he allegedly set up the New Year's Eve murder of Cervantes in Las Piñas City.

The fugitive and the alleged mastermind, ex-Supt. Rafael Cardeño, each has a price tag of P1 million for their arrest.

Camacho, 55, no longer wears a mustache and looks a bit older in a recent picture found during a raid of his safe house at 7 Aquino St., Sierra Vista, Cupang, Antipolo City.

"We almost got him," said Chief Supt. Romeo Maganto, head of a special police task force formed to go after Camacho and Cardeño.

Acting on a tip, Maganto and his men stormed the Antipolo safe house at around 10 p.m. on April 30, only to find out that Camacho and a companion had fled about two hours earlier.

Maganto said the house is owned by Grace Valdez Mangapot, Camacho's alleged mistress with whom he has a child. The fugitive's real wife is a doctor living in the US, he added.

Police are set to file criminal charges against Mangapot for allegedly harboring Camacho.

Found in the safe house were several pictures and identification cards of Camacho, Maganto said.

One ID, which expired in December 2001, identified Camacho as an agent of the Land Transportation Office during the term of retired Gen. Edgardo Abenina, an ex-member of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa.

Another ID identified the fugitive as a member of the LTO press corps. It had the signature of Cardeño as chief of staff of Abenina.

Maganto and his men also found a calling card identifying Camacho as a member of RAM, the former military rebel group initially tagged in the killing of Cervantes.

Before the raid, Camacho had stayed in the Antipolo house for about a week, at the time when police were looking for him in Mindanao, neighbors told police.

The Mindanao hunt collared two Sonny Camachos who later turned out to be namesakes of the fugitive. One of them was a farmer while the other one was a tricycle driver.

"Somehow, the (hunt) worked to our favor because he relaxed here in Manila," Maganto told the INQUIRER Monday night.

Ex-cop's killing puzzles probers

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE MANILA police suspect that family problems or the illegal drug trade might have had something to do with the brutal murder of one of their former colleagues in Binondo last Sunday.

"We are looking into all the possible angles in this case," said Detective Alfredo Salazar, of the Western Police District-homicide section.

Former Manila policeman turned casino financier Peter M. Ignacio, 43, was tortured, killed, and his bloodied body abandoned inside a van.

He had nine gunshot wounds, one stab wound near his shoulder, and bruises in different parts of his body, said Salazar.

"He was tortured before he was killed. The suspects must have killed somewhere and left his body in the van," Salazar added.

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CHECKUP IN JAILS
Jail guards wear protective masks as they conduct check-ups on visiting relatives of inmates at the Manila city jail as part of an intensified drive against the deadly SARS virus. ERIK ARAZAS

Jails' clean-up set in bid to fight SARS

By TJ Burgonio

HAVE clean environment, will prevent SARS.

Local Government Secretary Joey Lina yesterday sent this message across to jail authorities as he launched a clean-up drive in highly congested city and town jails to prevent the spread of the SARS virus among inmates.

Lina, together with Mayor Sonny Belmonte and other officials, visited the Quezon City jail in Kamuning, Quezon City, at around 9 a.m. to oversee the first day of the week-long clean-up of the jail facilities and its environs.

"Most of our city and municipal jails not only in Metro Manila, but also in other regions are congested. And under such a condition, inmates are susceptible to all kinds of illness. So it's necessary for our jails to have a clean environment," he said.

On Lina's instruction, Senior Supt. Antonio Cruz, officer in charge of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, briefed inmates on how to prevent and control the spread of the deadly SARS virus, and handed out flyers.

The seedy Quezon City jail, which is home to more than 1,000 inmates and which sits in a small property behind a police station, is the second most congested jail in Metro Manila after Manila City jail.

Lina had earlier directed Cruz to sanitize all city, municipal and district jails around the country following President Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration of May 5 to 9 as national anti-SARS consciousness and clean-up week.

Lina said that the clean-up drive would be undertaken throughout the year to contain not only SARS, but also other diseases like dengue during the rainy season.

Manila now has quarantine unit

By Jerome Aning

THE MANILA city government has formally opened its own isolation and quarantine center to house people confirmed or suspected of having the dreaded Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

Mayor Lito Atienza personally inspected the two-story facility at the Ospital ng Maynila in Malate the other day. He was briefed by Osma medical director Cristina Padolina and other medical personnel assigned to the facility.

The quarantine center has eight isolation rooms with specifications that conform to the minimum standards for SARS isolation facilities set by the World Health Organization and the Department of Health.

All isolation rooms have "non-directional" independent air supply and ventilation systems and each has its own toilet and bathroom.

The facility can accommodate 20 patients at any given time.

Motorists, stick to your lanes

By Leila B. Salaverria

MOTORISTS beware. Even in the dead of night, stick to your designated lanes.

The Metro Manila Development Authority has made the "yellow lane" system on major thoroughfares effective 24 hours a day.

Previously, the system, which identifies the proper lanes where each kind of vehicle should be, was enforced from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said one of the objectives in enforcing the lane assignments is to prevent or minimize late-night accidents, which tend to happen when speeding motorists weave in and out of the various lanes of major thoroughfares.

Vergel de Dios said that by making vehicles stick to their proper lanes, they would be forced to travel more slowly and are less prone to accidents.

The yellow lane is for buses only and actually encompasses two lanes: the first lane, which is closest to the curb, is the loading and unloading area, while the second lane is for buses who wish to move on.

The third lane is for cargo trucks and provincial buses, while the fifth and sixth lanes are for private vehicles.

Violators of the system will be fined P300.

Vergel de Dios said that while the MMDA's traffic enforcers stay on their posts up to 10 p.m. only, motorcycle-riding enforcers are deployed 24-hours a day and could catch violators during the night or early morning.

Earlier, MMDA officials have said that when motorists stop weaving in and out of various lanes, their travel time would be cut by half an hour.

Oops, this just won't work

SQUATTERS trying to make a killing out of the planned privatization of the New Bilibid Prisons compound in Muntinlupa might just end up empty-handed.

The city government and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council have begun discussions on the plight of around 3,000 families living in the compound since the 1950s.

The talks do not cover hundreds of families who reportedly put up shanties there when news about the 550-hectare property's sale came out, said Tez Valencia, Muntinlupa information officer.

"The local government has no obligation to them," she told the INQUIRER recently. "Our concern are the legitimate residents."

Mayor Jaime Fresnedi and HUDCC chair Michael Defensor had met to draw up plans for the 3,000 families who might be affected.

Christian Esguerra

Graft raps filed vs 7 PRC execs

By Volt Contreras

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation has filed graft charges against seven officials of the Professional Regulatory Commission and three review center owners linked to the alleged "leakage" that marked the licensure exams for marine deck officers in June 2001.

The Presidential Anti-Graft Commission on April 28 received the NBI's findings calling for the prosecution of then Acting PRC Chair Alfonso Abad and five other officials.

The other PRC officials cited were Assistant Commissioner Aristogerson Gesmundo, Capt. Ernesto Bondoc; and Board Examiners Jesse Martinez, Aurelio Picardal, Jose Modelo,and Rodolfo Aspillaga.

Also held liable were Captains Renato Sangalang of Golden Success Maritime Consultancy, Dennis Santiago of SBR Review Center, and Wilfredo Marco of Marco Review Center.

In a 13-page report, the NBI said five days before the licensure exams that ran from June 30 to July 2, a leakage or tip was released to some examinees which enabled them to earn "unusually high grades."

Fourteen examinees got a perfect score, 41 got 99 percent correct, while 74 others hit 98 percent, according to an 11-member NBI investigation team led by Flor Resurreccion.

Several groups protested the results as these were unprecedented in PRC history and in the maritime profession, the agents noted.

Abad, Gesmundo and Bondoc were cited for their "apparent deliberate neglect" in investigating the leakage.

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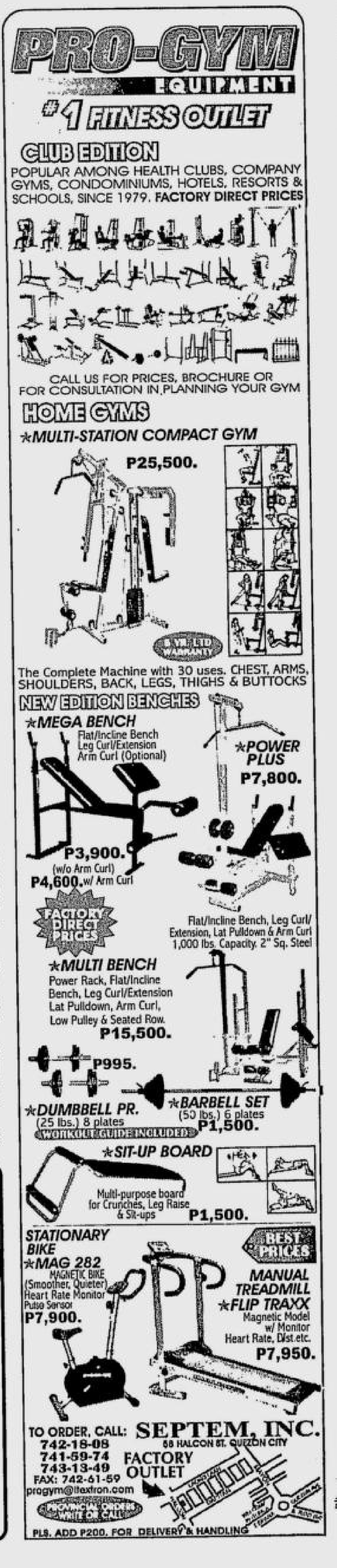

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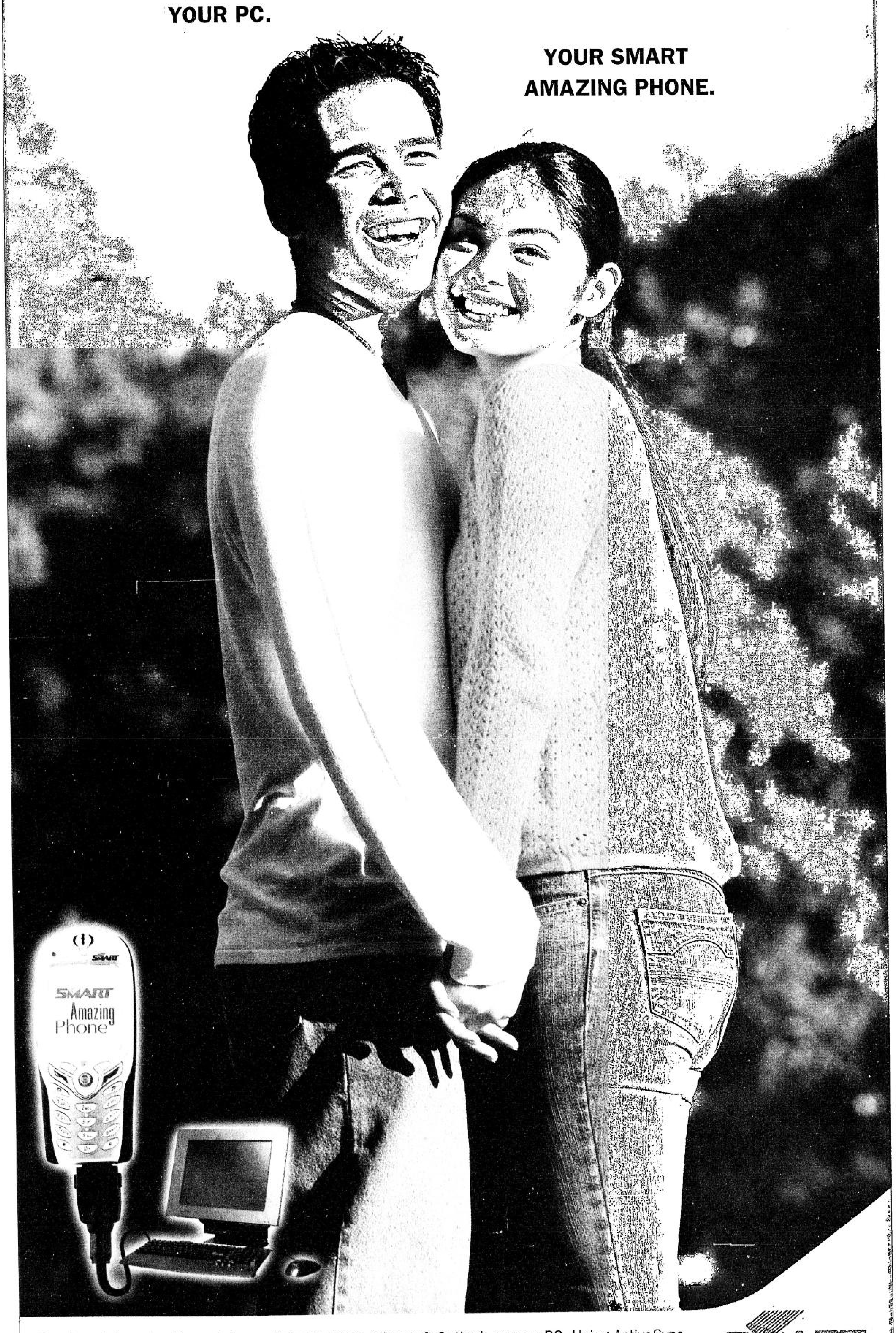
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WHAT'S INSIDE

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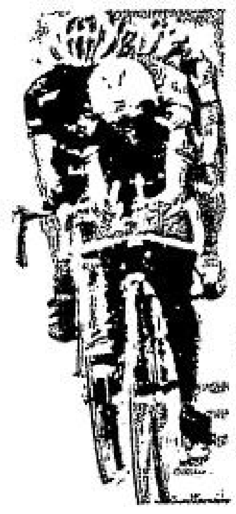


Quirimit regains Tour top spot /A26

Pacquiao next title defense in LA /A28

Agassi loses No. 1 ranking /A28

Torion et al. can't be charged

GAMES TODAY *(Philsports)*
6:00 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Red Bull
7:30 p.m.—Ginebra vs SMB

By TJ Burgonio
and Marc Anthony Reyes

THEY could be punished and suspended, but PBA players who tested positive for drug use cannot be charged criminally.

This is because these athletes were caught after submitting to random drug testing sanctioned by the PBA, explained Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) director general Anselmo Avenido yesterday.

It would have been a different case, Avenido said, if the players had tested positive for banned substances after being arrested in an anti-drug operation.

"In their case, they were not arrested, so filing criminal charges against them is not applicable. What's applicable is punishing them with administrative sanction such as suspension or dismissal," Avenido told reporters.

TORION

Even if it wants to, the PDEA chief stressed they cannot lodge criminal charges for violation of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act against the erring players.

The PBA on Monday announced it would conduct compulsory drug testing of all PBA players after it was rocked by a third straight scandal in ten days following reports that Norman Gonzales of Talk N' Text had tested positive for drugs.

Just like Batang Red Bull's Jimwell Torion and Alex Crisano, two PBA drug offenders before him, Gonzales has been suspended indefinitely by the league.

Although PBA Commissioner Noli Eala had earlier maintained the random drug testing on players had been serving its purpose, the third straight serious drug case announced on Monday left the PBA with no recourse but to go for a compulsory check on all its active cagers.

Asi Taulava, Gonzales' teammate at Talk N' Text, was earlier found positive for marijuana together with Dorian Peña of San Miguel Beer.

Gonzalez, 26, who was reportedly caught using Ecstasy, asked for a retesting yesterday.

Senate claim on Asi denied

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

DAZA

TACLOBAN CITY—Northern Samar Governor Raul Daza yesterday denied allegations he and his brother helped fix the papers of Asi Taulava to make it appear that PBA star has Filipino lineage.

Daza insisted that Taulava, whose Filipino roots were questioned during a Senate inquiry, together with those of other PBA mainstays, has relatives in Southern Samar.

Daza said Yuri del Valle, municipal civil registrar of San Jose, Northern Samar, was lying when he claimed that Taulava had no descendants in the province.

"It is public knowledge here that Mt. Taulava has descendants in one of the families here in the province. The report (that he has no roots in the province) is not true," Daza told the INQUIRER in an interview over his mobile phone yesterday.

He said the revelations made by Del Valle during the Senate inquiry on the so-called Filshams were politically motivated.

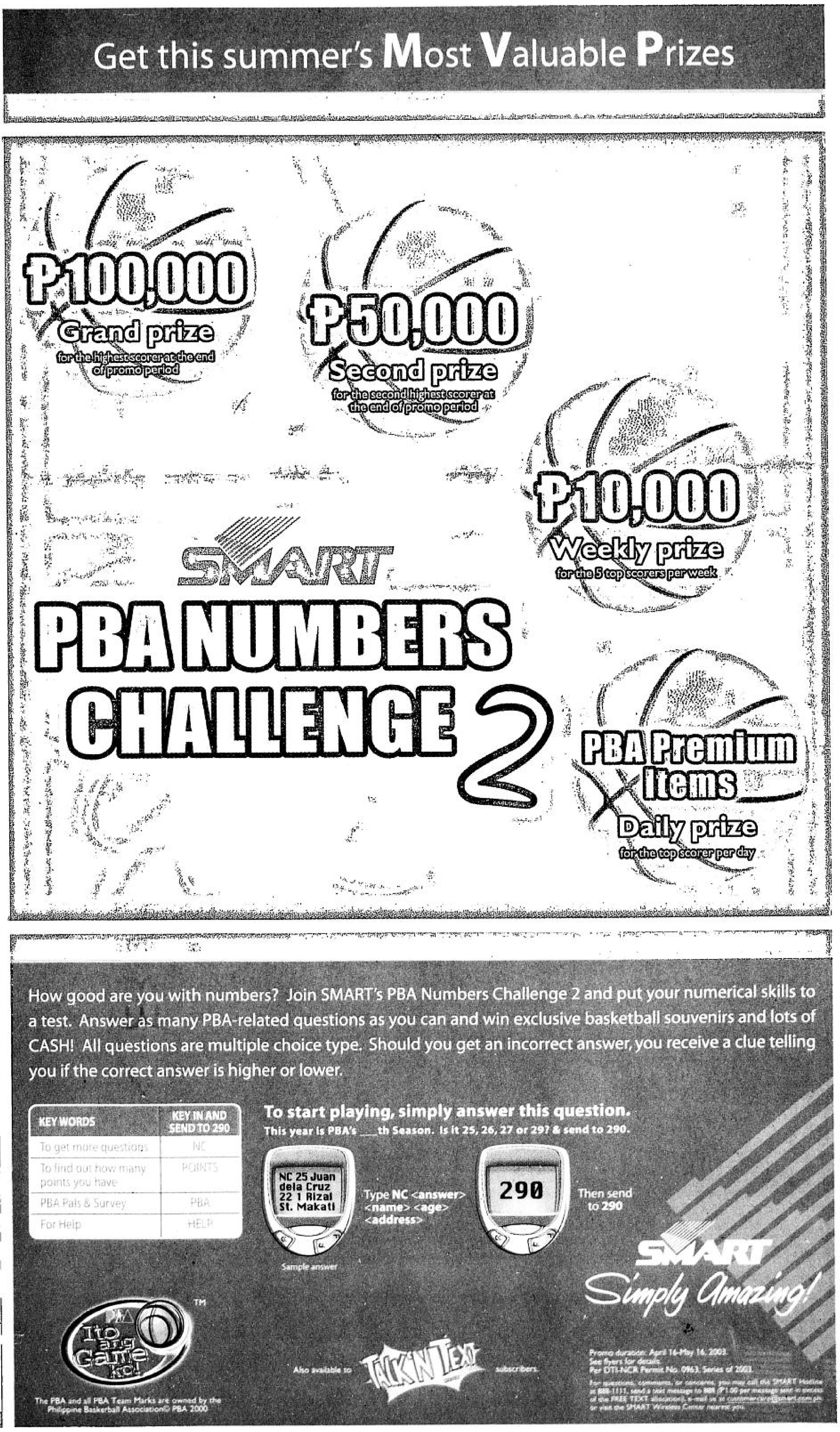
Daza however failed to mention who could have influenced Del Valle to make such claim.

In wrapping up its report, the Senate committee on games, amusement and sports said on Monday that at least five mainstays in the PBA, who formally claimed Filipino lineage, have no roots in the Philippines.

The Senate committee named the players whose documentation as half-Filipino was dubious as Asi Taulava, John Ordoño, Ali Peek, Dorian Peña, and Rudolf Hatfield.

Sen. Robert Barbers, chair of the Senate committee on games, said his committee made an investigation and visited the place of birth of people that these players have claimed to be their relatives but couldn't find their birth, baptismal, residential "and even death certificates."

The Senate hearing was highlighted by the claim made by Del Valle that he helped fix the papers of Taulava upon the request of Don Raymundo "Boy" Daza, brother of former Samar congressman and now Gov. Raul Daza.



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Overall Standings

RANK	RIDER		TEAM	TIME
1	ARNEL	QUIRIMIT	TAN	35h39'14.471
2	MERCULIO	RAMOS	SAM	00h00'43.141
3	RHYAN	TANGUILIG	PAG	00h01'13.331
4	ENRIQUE	DOMINGO	POS	00h01'31.632
5	WARREN	DAVADILLA	INT	00h05'42.391
6	SANTI	BARNACHEA	BOW	00h12'30.412
7	BERNARD	LUZON	PAT	00h12'47.690
8	JOSEPH	MILLANES	TAN	00h13'29.073
9	PLACIDO	VALDEZ	DRU	00h14'11.521
10	LLOYD	REYNANTE	PAG	00h14'28.910
11	ALFIE	CATALAN	BOW	00h14'43.871
12	RONALD	GORRANTES	ECO	00h16'05.761
13	LITO	ATILANO	GIL	00h16'53.640
14	FERNANDO	ALAGANO	INT	00h17'43.821
15	RENATO	DOLOSA	GIL	00h17'48.402
16	FELIX	CELESTE	VAT	00h20'25.934
17	FREDERICK	FELICIANO	DRU	00h22'25.983
18	ALBERT	PRIMERO	PLD	00h22'44.752
19	ARNOLD	MARCELO	POS	00h25'48.403
20	CARLO	JAZUL	ECO	00h34'14.643
21	DANNY	GANIGAN	SAM	00h34'47.786
22	REYNALDO	NAVARRO	POS	00h36'28.131
23	SHERWIN	DIAMSAY	VAT	00h49'57.932
24	ERICSON	OBOSA	TAN	00h51'38.161
25	REINHARD	GORANTES	PAT	00h52'58.094
26	NILO	ESTAYO	INT	00h54'36.800
27	PATERNO	CURTAN	ECO	00h54'42.542
28	JOEL	CALDERON	VAT	01h00'10.934
29	CARLO	GUIEB	ECO	01h02'22.884
30	MANUEL	MENDOZA	SAM	01h06'09.366

TEAM STANDINGS

PL	TEAM	TIMED	DEFICIT
1	INTEL	143h56'49.4	
2	POSTMEN	144h19'27.5	00h22'38.14
3	TANDUAY RHUM RIDERS	144h25'36.6	00h28'47.20
4	SAMSUNG	144h45'27.3	00h48'37.97
5	ECO SAVERS	144h53'03.1	00h56'13.70
6	BOWLING GOLD	145h05'31.0	01h08'41.64
7	PATROL 117	145h08'11.7	01h11'22.31
8	PAGCORSPORTS	145h17'13.2	01h20'23.86
9	VAT RIDERS	145h34'50.5	01h38'01.16
10	GILBEYS ISLAND PUNCH	145h56'26.1	01h59'36.72
11	DRUG BUSTERS	146h27'15.3	02h30'25.94
12	PLDT-NDD	147h12'14.1	03h15'24.72

Quirimit leader again

Davadilla-led Intel tops time trial

By June Navarro

LAOAG CITY—The shake-up was deprived of the usual drama but Arnel Quirimit quietly regained the yellow jersey in the 10th lap that saw Intel cementing its grip on the overall leadership during yesterday's Tour Pilipinas Team Time Trial.

Intel rode high on the indomitable Warren Davadilla who anchored his team in the serpentine, 83-kilometer route from Vigan.

Riding along with Paulo Manapol, Michael Reyes and Nilo Estayo, Davadilla carried Intel fastest to the finish in seven hours, 19 minutes and 43 seconds.

Intel jacked up its aggregate time to 143 hours, 56 minutes and 49 seconds, 22 minutes and 38 seconds ahead of the Postmen in the mad dash to the P1-million champion team's prize.

Flawless riding shoved Quirimit back into the limelight as the Tanduay Rhum Riders' skipper dislodged Samsung's Merculio Ramos from the overall lead.

Quirimit jumped from fourth to the top after registering 35 hours, 39 minutes and 14 seconds, thus ending the six-lap overall reign of Ramos, who slipped to second while nursing a 43-second deficit.

"This time I will not let the overall lead slip from my grasp and with the support of my teammates, I could probably maintain it even in the Baguio laps," said Quirimit in Tagalog.

"We will know who among us will win the Tour in Baguio. Anybody who is in shape aside from having power and the right strategy will get the crown," he added.

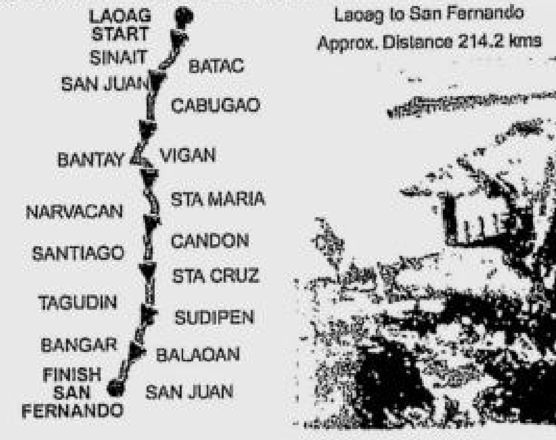
Quirimit considers Ramos, Davadilla and PagcorSports team captain Rhyan Tanguilig as his fiercest rivals in the dreaded Baguio City stages.

Quirimit wears the yellow jersey, symbolic of the overall lead, for the fourth time today when the 82 riders go on a 214.2-kilometer trek to San Fernando, La Union.

"Now that Arnel has it, the pressure has somehow diminished. I will attack in the flatlands today," said Ramos, who spearheaded Samsung to a seventh place finish in the TTT that had them retaining their position at fourth overall.

With the rise of Quirimit, Tanguilig (third) and Enrique Domingo (fourth) fell one notch in the standings while Davadilla retained his position at fifth, five minutes and 42 seconds off the lead.

Barnachea jumped from 11th to sixth, Bernard Luzon slid from seventh to sixth, Millanes climbed from 13th to eighth, Placido Valdez dropped from seventh to ninth and Lloyd Reynante fell to 10th overall from ninth.



DAVADILLA setting the pace for Intel. VAL HANDUMON

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WILD WORLD ENTERTAINMENT CO., INC'S BAYARAN
A FRANCIS 'JUN' POSADAS Film

Another film company has thrown its producing hat in the showbiz ring- Wild World Entertainment Company Inc.(WWECI). Executive producer Reno G. Lim heads the new company, an affiliate of a successful communications company and is no fly by night one movie a year company. The new film outfit hopes to make 8 to 10 movies starting next year.

Already, WWECI has released its initial offering, Boldstar. introducing Candy Alison and directed by Angelito de Guzman. For its second movie, Bayaran, it will be using the combined magic of Director Francis 'Jun' Posadas and actor Jay Manalo when it comes to launching new film outfits and stars.

Bayaran is a sexy action movie written by Jerry Arcega-Gracio. Joining Jay in the main cast are Maricar de Mesa, Carlos Morales, Ricardo Cepeda and John Apacible. Introduced in the movie is WWECI's exclusive, Krestel Venecia.

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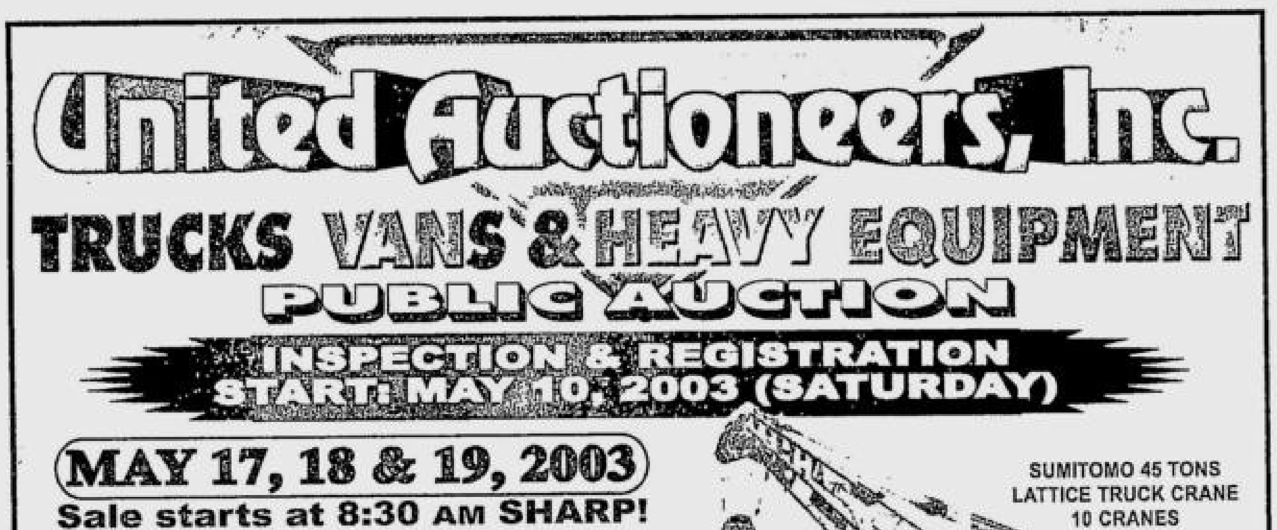

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Gutierrez moves up in Jungolf tilt

By Jong Arcano

IG GUTIERREZ took advantage of Miko Alejandro's big dive to emerge the new boys Class B leader even as interesting battles for the other divisions shaped up except for Class D where Wolen Juan Superal and Dottie Ardina were virtually unreachable after the penultimate round of the Samsung Jungolf Tour at the Sherwood Hills Golf Club course.

Gutierrez carded an impressive even-par 72 to move up by two over Allan Guy with his 148 aggregate for 36 holes. Gino Bunyi was five behind at 153 while first round leader Miko Alejandro fell six shots off after fading with an 82.

There were marked improvements from the challengers especially in boys Class E where AR Ramos outscored the fancied Bino dela Paz by two with his 81 and cut the deficit to just three. Ramos totaled 171 against the 168 of Junior World qualifier dela Paz.

Justin Tambunting's 75 put him one stroke ahead of Lawrence Macatangay in boys Class A while Crystal Faith Superal padded her lead to four over Debbie de Villa in girls Class C following a 77.

As Kristina Potenciano remained six up on Sun Mi Huang in girls Class E and Jik Jik Abdon bloated his lead in boys Class C to 16, Wolen Juan Superal and Dottie Ardina got their respective missions accomplished early.

Superal's fifth straight sub-par effort of 71 and eighth in his last nine rounds pushed him 23 up over Christian Ricohermoso and Ardina's 79-157 was just too much for her rivals with Katya dela Cruz (93-188) running second.

The other major sponsors of the event are Philippine Airlines, Airlift Asia, Exito Mfg., Global Lighting and Air Liquide, Phils. Pisanti Golf, Bellevue Manila, Third World Eximport, HBW Enterprises, MCCI Corp. and BF Technology are minor sponsors.

Royals make it 11 straight

KANSAS CITY, Missouri—With 15,000 fans waving T-shirts that said "Believe" in both English and Spanish, the Kansas City Royals gave them yet another reason to do just that.

The surprising Royals became the first team in 92 years to win its first 11 home games, rallying for two runs in the ninth inning to beat the Boston Red Sox 7-6 on Monday night with the help of Nomar Garciaparra's second error.

With a victory Tuesday night, the Royals would tie the modern major league mark set by the 1911 Detroit Tigers, who started 12-0 at home.

"What record?" Raul Ibanez said. "Honestly, I had no idea. It would be nice to be a part of history, I suppose. But I'd much rather just get the win."

As a promotion, Kansas City gave the first 15,000 promotional T-shirts that say "Believe!" in English and "Nosotros Creemos" (we all believe) in Spanish. And it looked like all 15,000 were being waved in the air as the Royals loaded the bases in the ninth on two singles and a walk.

Complete results:

National League—Reds 5, Cardinals 4; Houston 8, Pittsburgh 1; Milwaukee 5, Chicago Cubs 3; Arizona 10, Philadelphia 1; Astros 8, Pirates 1; Brewers 5, Cubs 3; Diamondbacks 10, Phillies 1.

American League—Royals 7, Sox 6; Detroit 6, Baltimore 1; Tigers 6, Orioles 1. *AP*

Isabela bikefest all set

A FIELD of 60 cyclists padded the list of participants in the three-day Tour of Isabela reeling off May 7. Organizer Silvestre Bello III said the new entries upped total participation to 100 cyclists including 40 who won slots through elimination runs held recently.

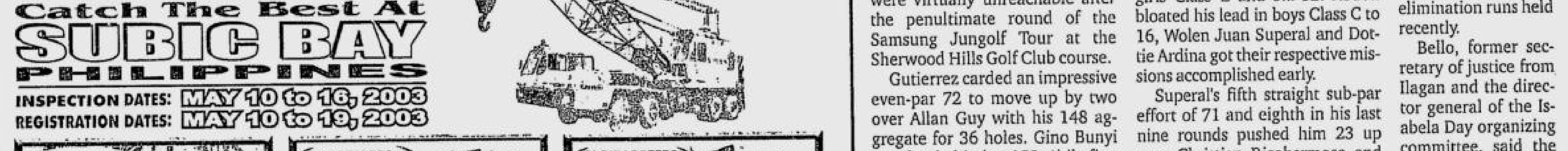
Bello, former secretary of justice from Ilagan and the director general of the Isabela Day organizing committee, said the Tour would be in two categories, one for elite racing and the other for mountain bikers.

Overall chair of the celebration is Gov. Faustino S. Dy Jr. with Gamu mayoral aspirant Fernando (Ando) Cumigad as co-chair of the organizing sports committee.

At stake will be cash prizes of P10,000 down to survivor's prize of P1,000 for the "elite group" expected to number 60 out of the 100 participants.

Prizes topped by a P5,000 award would be at stake in the second category.

Paca secretary general Armando Bautista left Sunday for Isabela to check that the three laps are properly marked out, to avoid any route mixup.



Daily Individual Time Update

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The PBA badly needs a narcotic

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

HAS anybody written the story about the death of the PBA?

This question was thrown at the sports desk by a senior editor last week.

He, naturally, did not get his undeserved reply.

Why? Because the PBA is alive, although it definitely is not kicking.

You see, if there's a kick out of the league, it must be the magical chemistry several players have enjoyed while blissfully on board the fleeting fumes of banned drugs–shabu, marijuana, Ecstacy, etc.

***

But that question about the alleged impending death of the PBA did not come as a result of the drug menace that has hounded the pro league.

No. The editor made the deathly observation after he had watched the last PBA outing, featuring the popular Ginebra team, at the Makati Coliseum.

Nobody goes to PBA games anymore, the senior editor tried to explain matter-of-factly.

He had a point there. And it was not easy to contest.

The bleachers and the box sections that night at the Makati Coliseum wore the sad, wrinkled face of an old, forgotten woman–with all her front teeth missing.

The editor was right. If it were, say, Shell or Fed Ex, which played at Makati last week, the eerie, toothless gaps at the empty gallery would have been explainable.

But Ginebra? The PBA is dying, the editor swore.

***

But hold it. When Ginebra next played at the Philsports in Pasig, Ginebra fanatics came running to the game.

They gleefully filled their favorite section of the arena, to cheer and root, maddeningly as usual, for the Gin Kings.

The Ginebra gallery, naturally, was again flashing the smile of a beautiful young lady with her sweet toothpaste ad smile.

Unfortunately, Ginebra lost yet another big game in its bid to survive the first round of eliminations.

It's now pitifully stuck at the bottom with 10 losses and only 4 wins.

Of course, there's the Shell (also 4-10) to keep it lonely company.

***

A lot of people, no doubt, feel very bad about Ginebra.

Cage fans, the most numerous hereabouts, would like to keep Ginebra happy company, for as long as possible.

But if there's one guy who must pray hard for Ginebra to find what its beleaguered coach calls the missing chemistry, it's Commissioner Noli Eala himself.

Look, Eala had to stand up and say the PBA, at the height of the drug menace in the league, "ought to be commended, and not condemned."

Eala explained they are in control and are doing their share to solve the (drug) problem.

Eala was quick enough to find the right chemistry.

With his sound moves, like the compulsory testing on all active players, Eala can only be expected to rid the league of the drug menace.

But if the PBA has to live its old happy life, when the bursting gallery never failed to scream in drugged delight, he must help Caidic.

Yes, and Eala must rush in to help Caidic who continues to be frustrated in his search for the missing chemistry.

Why? 'Coz it's not the drug problem that's bound to kill the PBA.

Eala must make sure Caidic avoids more disenchanted evenings for the countless, irrepressible Ginebra fanatics.

Ginebra winning and winning is the people's, the league's narcotic.

> Commissioner Noli Eala can only be expected to rid the league of the drug menace

SPORTSWATCH

Borja wins in Ormoc

MICHAEL Borja outsprinted James Sardea and Jun Miguel Mendoza to win the 1.56-kilometer Downhill Competition of the Terry Larrazabal Bike Festival recently in Ormoc City. Borja's winning time of 1:19:80 was 10 seconds faster than Sardea. The two-day event attracted 460 participants nationwide and more than a thousand spectators. The varied terrain of the perimeters of Lake Danao and Bantigue provided an assortment of off-road challenges for the bikers, especially the downhill course which included technical and fireroad sections. Boying Rodriguez and Boyet Calma of Power Bikes in Makati assisted in the racecourse design. The event was organized by Gregorio Larrazabal and supported by the Emeterio Larrazabal Foundation Inc. Other backers include Rudy Project Eyewear, Coca Cola, Metro Pharma Phil., Pagcor, Powerade, San Miguel Brewery, Bike Room and Wellson Bike Shop. *Joyce Abaño*

Sun Paddlers shine

BORACAY—The Sun Paddlers, composed mostly of local rowers, won the overall title in the recent Philippine Dragon Boat Quest 2003 here. Bugsay Boracay team placed second followed by the Manila Paddlers. In the Mixed Open category, Bugsay Blades A, another Boracay-based team, triumphed over two teams from Manila to claim the top spot, followed by PCU-St-Scholastica. The Manila Dragons rowing team, composed of students and professionals and was formed in 1991, placed second runner-up with 2:37. Bugsay Blades 1 also took part in this category. *Sharon Robas*

Adornado joins camp

ADORNADO

BOGS Adornado, the three-time PBA MVP, will join the ASM Basketball Camp at Villa Leandro in Sariaya, Quezon, May 9-11. He will be with fellow PBA legends Dave Regullano and two-time PBA MVP Abet Guidaben in the Camp sponsored by Fun Chum Fruit Drinks, adidas, Toyota Revo, PAL, Pilipinas Shell, Mizuno, BMGSolar, Citgo and Infinite Ideas' Gelo Serrano. The province-hopping Camp has been to San Carlos City (Pangasinan), Quezon City and Marikina after its Grand Launch in Calauag, Quezon, on March 29 under the auspices of Engr. Louie S. Visorde. The other coaches for the Sariaya Villa Leandro Camp, the only basketball academy recognized by the Philippine Sports Commission, are Ronald Perada, Bernard Ramos, Peter Sta. Maria, Caloy Sillona, Lito Legaspi and Noel Caparros, with Dayong J. Mendoza as Camp Director. For inquiries, call 9325124.

Taekwondo Sunday

AROUND 1,200 newcomers from various Metro Manila and provincial teams are expected to see action in the 2003 Petron New Face of the Year Taekwondo Championships set on Sunday, May 11 at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium. According to Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado, competition will be conducted in six divisions, namely, senior men and women, junior men and women and grade school boys and girls. The event, which is also supported by Milo, is expected to lure entries from Baguio, Bago City, Tarlac, Ilocos Norte, Manila TKD, University of Santo Tomas, Las Piñas, Ateneo, Letran, DLSU (Taft & Dasmariñas, Cavite), College of St. Benilde, ADB, Central Gym, Super Bodies, FEU, San Beda, De La Salle Zobel, St. Benedict College, Staryom, OTTC, Don Bosco Makati, BNS, GHQ, Claret, Angelicum, Powerflex, Amoranto, Ateneo, LSM and UP.

Ozamiz to host NBL

THE NATIONAL Basketball League (NBL) will finally unveil its 2003 National Championship with festive rites at the Gov. Angel N. Medina Sr. Memorial Gymnatorium in Ozamiz City on May 23. Eight teams will be contesting the most prestigious crown of the revitalized community-based league. From the Northern Conference are the Spring Cooking Oil Masters, Forward Taguig, Tarlac Stallions and Pampanga Dragons. The Southern Conference will showcase Shineway Compak-Ozamiz, M. Lhuillier Kwarta Padala-Cebu, Air Philippines-Bacolod and Negros Oriental. Spring meets Cebu in the 4 p.m. opener, followed by the main game between Tarlac and host Ozamiz at 6 p.m. Team owner and Ozamiz City Mayor Reynaldo O. Parojinog Sr. adopted a hands-on policy to ensure a successful opening salvo.

SPORTSTV Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: Kings vs Mavericks, Game 1; 9 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.); Solar Sports - Will a well - rested Sacramento squad hold the edge against a Dallas team, which barely survived stubborn Portland?

BILLIARDS: San Miguel Asian 9 - Ball Tour Highlights; 9 a.m. (r); Star Sports - Asia's finest billiards players battle each other for supremacy in Singapore.

Rack 'Em Up - Francisco Bustamante vs Radoslaw Babica; 7 p.m.; ESPN - It's Asia against Europe as our very own Django Bustamante takes on Radoslaw Babica.

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- Slip resistant, rubber foot pads

GALLERY SHELF
- Durable construction
- Easy to assemble

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BEFORE: P799.75

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Wallpaper
- Washable vinyl material
- Available in various designs/colors

P295ea
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No.1071 Series of 2003

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Duncan, Ginobili carry Spurs past LA Lakers

Nets draw first blood vs Celts

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San Antonio held on for just its second victory in the last 10 postseason meetings with Los Angeles.

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Game two is Wednesday in San Antonio.

In the other game, Kenyon Martin and Jason Kidd are helping the New Jersey Nets overcome their reputation for missing clutch free throws.

Final minute

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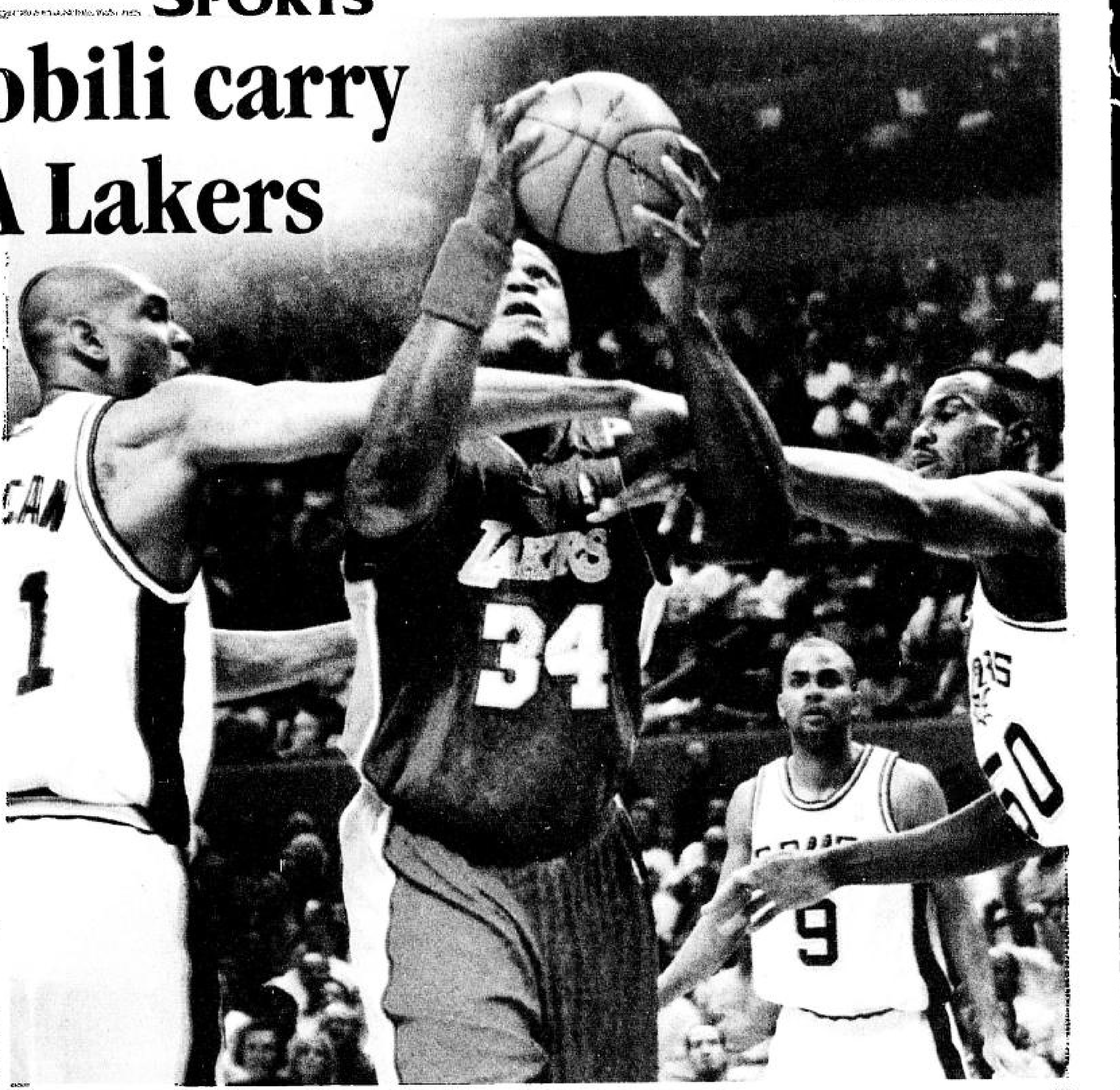

DUNCAN (left) and Robinson gang up on O'Neal. AFP

Pacquiao's next title defense in LA

By Rey Danseco
Contributor

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But the IBF president said that Elorde cannot negotiate a fight with a boxer who is under promotional contract to another promoter."

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Valbuena's contract with Murad will expire on June 15, 2003. However, he's now managed by his compatriot Manuel Alves Ferreira, who signed the contract offered by Elorde for a shot against Pacquiao's IBF super-bantam title.

Pacquiao remains under contract with Muhammad where he stands to receive a total $2.65 million in total purse.

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Ferrer was making his first appearance in Rome and had lost his last six first-round matches.

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AGASSI: Unlucky in Rome.

Leo's South stars whip North

By Dennis U. Eroa

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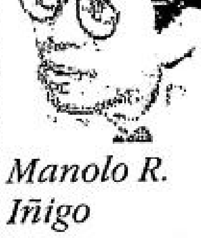

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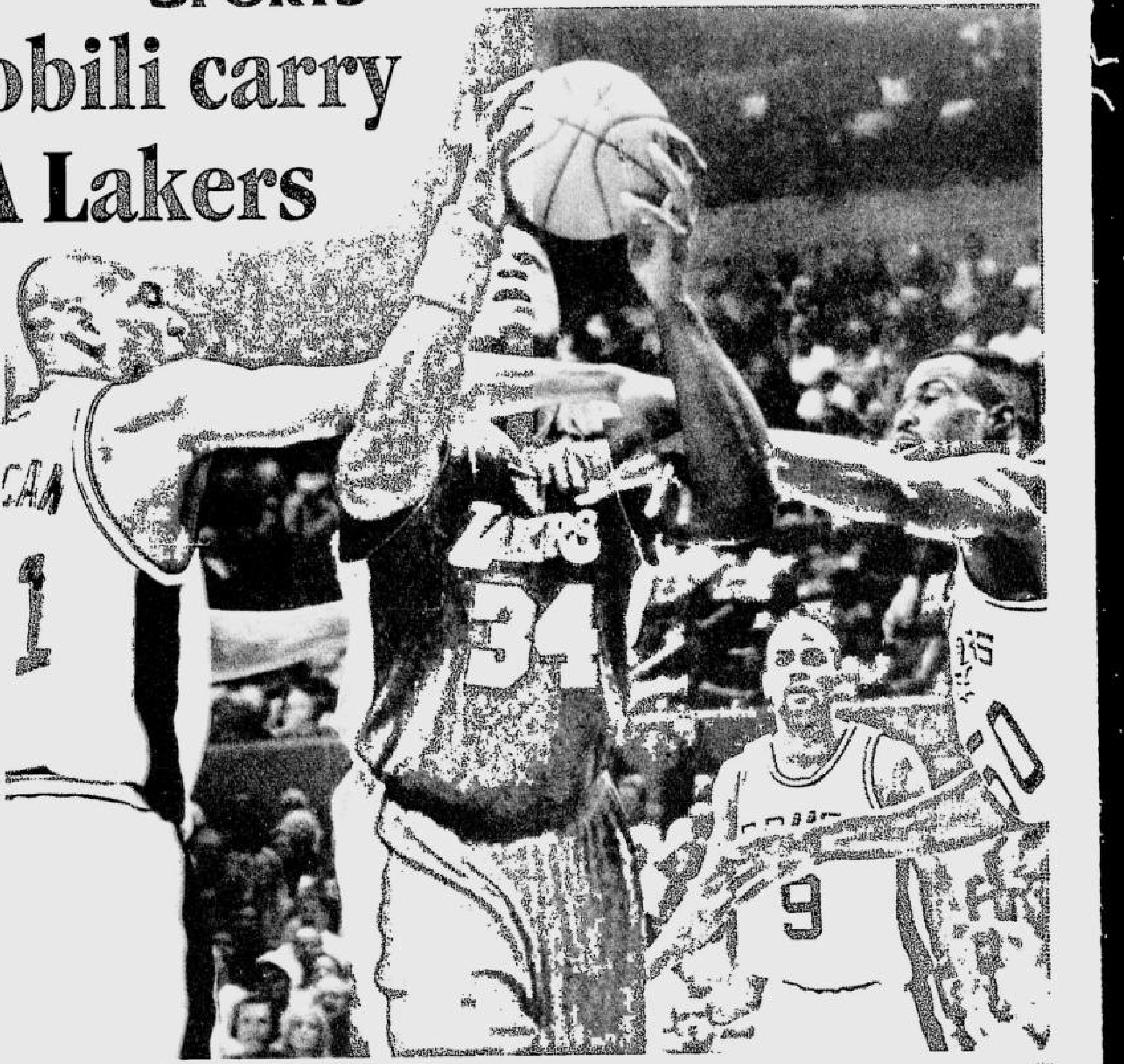

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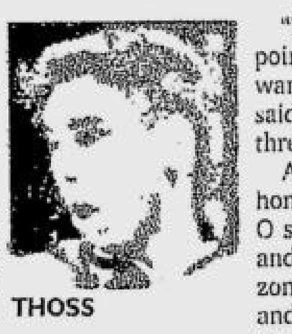

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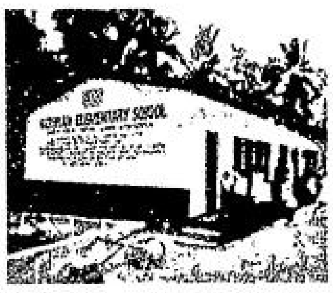
Coca-Cola
GOLF CLASSIC

Where double-bogeys, as much as pars, will help build the next Little Red Schoolhouse!

Tulay Talino
An Education Fund Drive
for the Filipino children.

All Little Red Schoolhouses are built to facilitate the multi-grade method of teaching endorsed by UNICEF



The future for many of the poorest Filipino public schoolchildren starts today at the Coca-Cola Golf Classic, an invitational event hosted by The Coca-Cola Export Corporation in cooperation with Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines, Inc.

Participating in the invitational are mainly corporate executives and business leaders. This event is part of an umbrella program called Tulay Talino (Bridge to Knowledge), a fundraising initiative for the Little Red Schoolhouse Project, the flagship program of the Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines, Inc.

A partnership with the Department of Education, the Little Red Schoolhouse Project has been hailed as an outstanding example of private and public sector cooperation. Launched in 1997, its original objective to build 50 schoolhouses over a five-year period has been achieved. The program has been extended, and all proceeds from the Coca-Cola Golf Classic will go to the second phase of the Little Red Schoolhouse Project.

All Little Red Schoolhouses are built to facilitate the multi-grade method of teaching endorsed by UNICEF as the most cost-effective way of providing primary education to as many children as possible. The method features two or more grade levels taught simultaneously by one teacher in the same classroom. It is estimated that well over 500,000 pupils and 12,000 teachers have benefited, directly or otherwise, from the Little Red Schoolhouse Project and its related workshops and seminars for teachers, education officials and even the students' parents.

At the Coca-Cola Golf Classic, which unfolds in the Langer and Couples championship courses of the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Cavite, a flag used in the 2001 Masters in Augusta, Georgia, will be auctioned. Having been an actual flag in America's most revered golfing event is enough to make it collector's item in itself, but there's more: the flag is autographed by Tiger Woods. (The flag bears a hologram from the Tiger Woods Foundation attesting to the authenticity of the superstar's autograph.)

The tournament's grand raffle prize is even more exciting: personally meeting Tiger Woods in Florida this October, with Business Class airfare and hotel accommodations for two fully paid for.

The Coca-Cola Golf Classic. If spending some quality time with Tiger Woods in Florida doesn't get golfing juices really flowing, the thought of helping build schoolhouses for the poorest Filipino schoolchildren by simply playing the game will.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

At long last, IBC 13 is now debt-free

By Leah Salterio

AFTER being burdened with liabilities of nearly P200 million in back taxes, employees' wages, benefits and settlement, IBC 13 is now debt-free at last, according to network president Renato Q. Bello.

The IBC 13 head said 20 percent of the network shares are still the subject of a case now with the Supreme Court. Pending the privatization of the network, IBC 13 is being run like a private corporation, he said.

The TV station was formerly owned by the family of Roberto Benedicto until it was sequestered by the Philippine Commission on Good Government (PCGG) during the term of President Corazon C. Aquino.

IBC has assets worth P3.5 billion, representing the value of its property in Broadcast City, Diliman, Quezon City.

Bello said the TV network would soon undergo "rehabilitation" to improve its programming, equipment, signal and provincial operations.

For its rehabilitation program, IBC 13 is awaiting a P300-million loan from a foreign bank. The money, Bello said, would be used to buy OB vans which would help improve the station's news coverage.

"We are trying to make a difference," he said. "We cannot really compete with ABS-CBN or GMA 7 in terms of resources and broadcast equipment. They are already complete."

He said IBC 13 ranked a "far third" among the local free TV networks, after ABS-CBN and GMA 7.

IBC 13 felt the crunch last year after Viva Entertainment pulled out nearly 50 hours of block time programming, which meant P20 million a month in lost income for the network, he explained.

Viva used to air the PBA Games and its old films on IBC. When its contract with the network expired, Viva simply renewed it with a three-hour weekly blocktimer.

"We had to make a paradigm shift when we lost the Viva programming block," Bello said. "We had to bite the bullet and retrench employees. We initiated an early separation or voluntary retirement program.

"We were able to retire 28 people, but paid P91 million in benefits. Benedicto was a very good employer. He gave very good benefits to his people."

Today's biggest IBC 13 blocktimer is Solar Entertainment, which airs the NBA Games.

"Twenty-five percent of our programs today are blocktimers," Bello said. "We want to have more station-produced shows and launch public affairs programs."

In the case of the PBA, the network agreed to be in a consortium with NBN 4, which recently won the three-year, P675-million contract to air the PBA Games.

IBC 13 and NBN 4 air the games simultaneously on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

Bello, who is also a lawyer, was IBC 13 board member for two years, when Boots Anson-Roa was concurrent chair and general manager appointed by former President Joseph Estrada.

In 2001, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo appointed Bello IBC 13 chair and president. But last January, Lincoln Tan, another presidential appointee, came in as chair.

Under his term, Bello was able to stabilize the relations between the network and its employees.

"I looked into labor cases that involved more than a hundred money claims," he said. "We spent a lot of money on the claims, but we also had compromise settlements with the employees and was able to save millions."

Bello credits Roa, who was able to secure a permanent franchise worth P100 million from Congress to allow IBC 13 to operate.

"That is a big help to us now," Bello granted.

Jim Carrey plays God

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

GEORGE Burns did it before, of course, but that hasn't stopped **Jim Carrey** from also 'playing God (no less) in his next comic starrer, "Bruce Almighty."

In the movie, Carrey portrays a "human interest" TV reporter who is unhappy with his life. At the end of the worst day of his life, he angrily ridicules God, who challenges him to take over His job, to see if he can do any better!

Well, Carrey's character accepts the challenge: BIG mistake. The result is a series of outrageous blunders and bloopers that puts the world's future in peril, until the real Deity has to step in again, just in the nick of time.

It's all done for laughs, of course, but Carrey also snatches a "lesson " or two from his screen character's unusual and ultimately humbling experience:

"No matter what happens, despite all the low blows that life lobs at you from time to time, you've got to keep a healthy perspective on things. We human beings get so tunnel-visioned at times that we have that one thing in our heads that we want to get and forget all the other gifts God has given us. We mustn't forget!"

OK, loud and clear.

Co-starring with Carrey in "Bruce Almighty" are **Jennifer Aniston** as his much-put-upon girlfriend, **Morgan Freeman** (as the "real" Deity), and **Tony Bennett**. The film is megged by one of Carrey's favorite directors, **Tom Shadyac**, who also handled him in "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" and "Liar, Liar."

'Pakners'

ON THE local film front, **Fernando Poe Jr.**'s first film for 2003, "Pakners," co-stars him with billiards king **Efren "Bata" Reyes**. Right away, you know that the film is about billiards.

In the action-comedy-drama movie, Efren plays a *provinciano* who comes to Manila to hunt down an illegal recruiter. Instead, he is rescued from a gang of toughs by FPJ's character, a former professional pool player.

In time, FPJ discovers that Efren has a natural aptitude for billiards, and they end up playing together. Soon, they're competing in international tournaments!

Trouble is, they become too good and popular for their own good. They attract the attention of a crime syndicate boss who wants them to throw a championship match. He has bet millions on their opponents, and wants to win big.

Will FPJ and Efren oblige? Knowing them, we're sure they won't!

Since Filipinos are crazy about billiards these days, "Pakners" should do very well indeed at the tills. Tony Y. Reyes directs.

Focus on Matchbox 20

EVERY month, Channel [V] showcases a unique musical artist or band. This month, the channel honors one of the hottest rock bands today, Matchbox 20.

Rob Thomas and the boys perform their hit songs live in Melbourne, Australia at 8 p.m., Thursday, May 15. And viewers can get to know the bandmates more personally on "The Inter[V]iew" on Tuesday, May 27 at 9 p.m.

Matchbox 20's hits include "Push," "Long Day," "3 a.m," "Bent," "Disease" and "Unwell."

More objectivity

IT'S INTERESTING to compare local TV newscasts with the news programs from abroad on cable channels. The local ones don't just report the news, they "perform" it, with the newscasters talking in a dramatic, even bombastic fashion.

There's also a difference in the choice of stories to feature, with local newscasts heavily favoring crime reports, confrontations, people at police precincts

JIM/A31

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	XEREX
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Ali 3	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
Ali 4	X-MEN 2
Ali 5	CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUS MIND
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Academy forms team to investigate 'Oscar-buying' campaigns

LOS ANGELES—Oscar bosses are planning to impose tough new rules to stop Hollywood studios from waging overly aggressive campaigns to convince Academy Awards voters to honor their movies.

The proposed beefed-up restrictions on pre-Oscars campaigning for cinema's highest honors come after unprecedented controversy over attempts by certain top Hollywood producers to influence Oscars voters.

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences president Frank Pierson said he had formed a committee to investigate Oscar campaign practices.

The campaign committee will confer with major players in the industry with the aim of "reducing the intensity of the campaigning," the officials confirmed.

"We all share the belief that it threatens the integrity of the Oscar," Pierson was quoted as saying. "The implication is that the Oscar can be bought by an intense campaign."

The proposed crackdown on overzealous campaigning comes after Miramax studios came under fire ahead of this year's Oscars in March for allegedly breaking unspoken Academy rules on campaigning for a best director Oscar for "Gangs of New York" filmmaker Martin Scorsese.

Scorsese lost the award to "The Pianist" director Roman Polanski.

A year earlier, there were allegations that one studio launched a public smear campaign against the ultimate winner of the 2002 best picture Oscar, "A Beautiful Mind," in a year marked by some of the dirtiest campaigning ever.

Pierson told industry bible Daily Variety that he would be meeting Miramax chief Harvey Weinstein in New York next week to discuss the planned crackdown on campaigns that officials fear could tarnish Oscar's reputation. *AFP*

Jim ...

From page A30

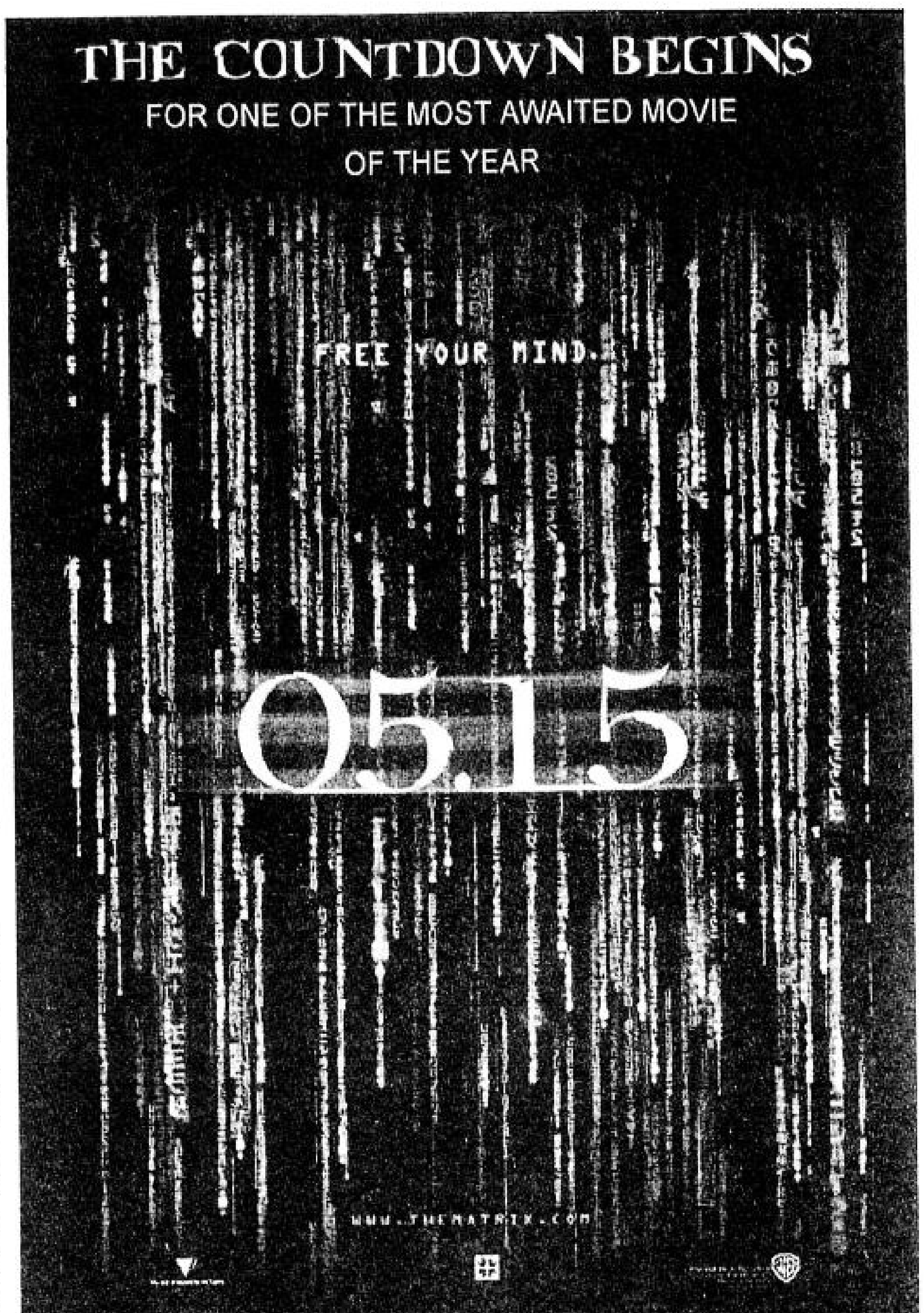
screaming at each other, etc.

Thank goodness, there are exceptions. When we want some peace and quiet—and objectivity—we get the news from the less melodramatic likes of **David Celdran** and **Angelo Castro Jr.**

Why do some local newscasters feel they have to "milk" the news for more drama and excitement? They must feel that local viewers like colors and conflict not just in TV soaps and sitcoms but in all of the programs they view as well.

They should disabuse themselves of this notion, which had its start on local radio. There are many viewers here who have learned to place great importance on newscasts, and value objectivity above all else.

They know that the news has to be reported objectively and without "coloring," so viewers are free to arrive at their own interpretation of the meaning of each day's events. TV people should mature as much as some of their viewers have, or lose them permanently to the more objective cable news reports.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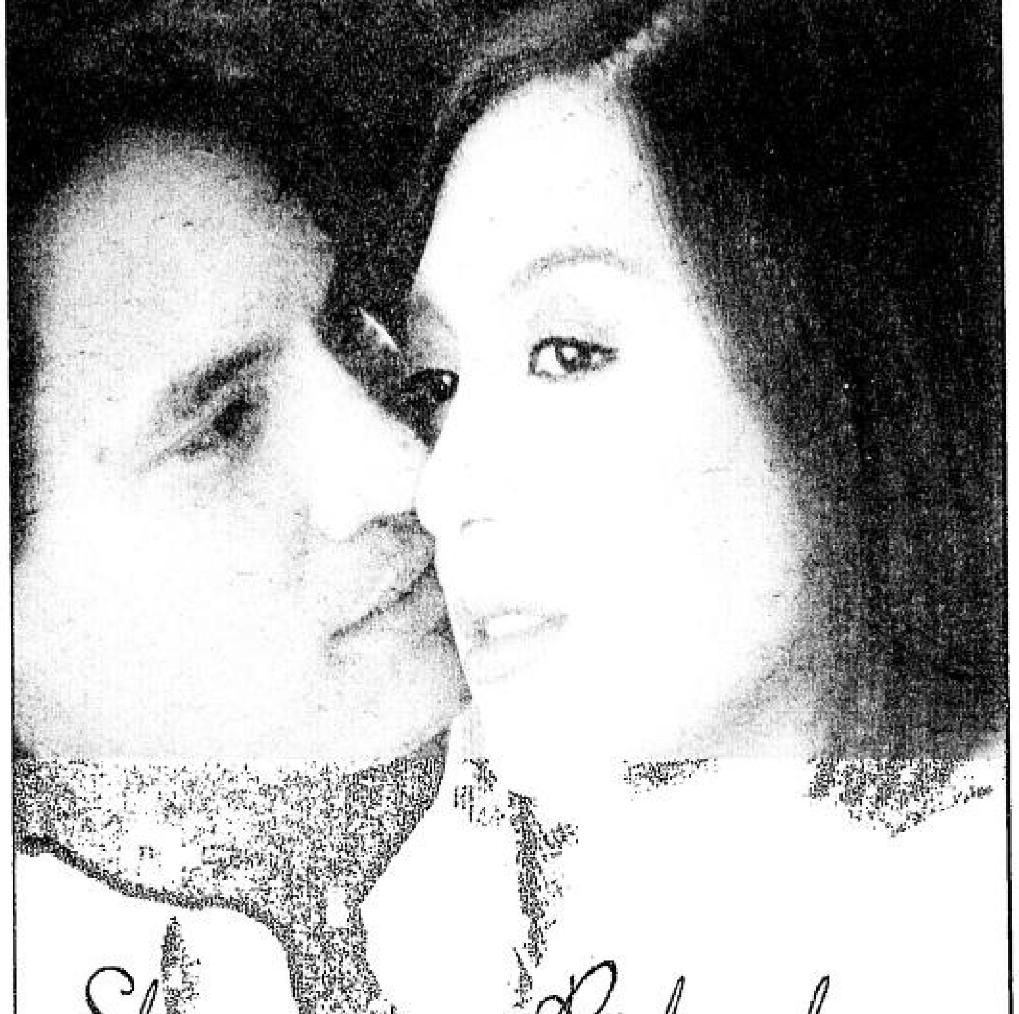
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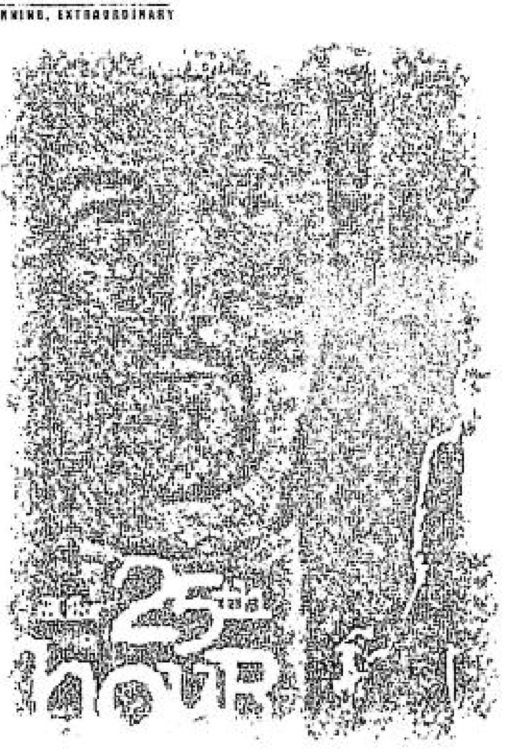

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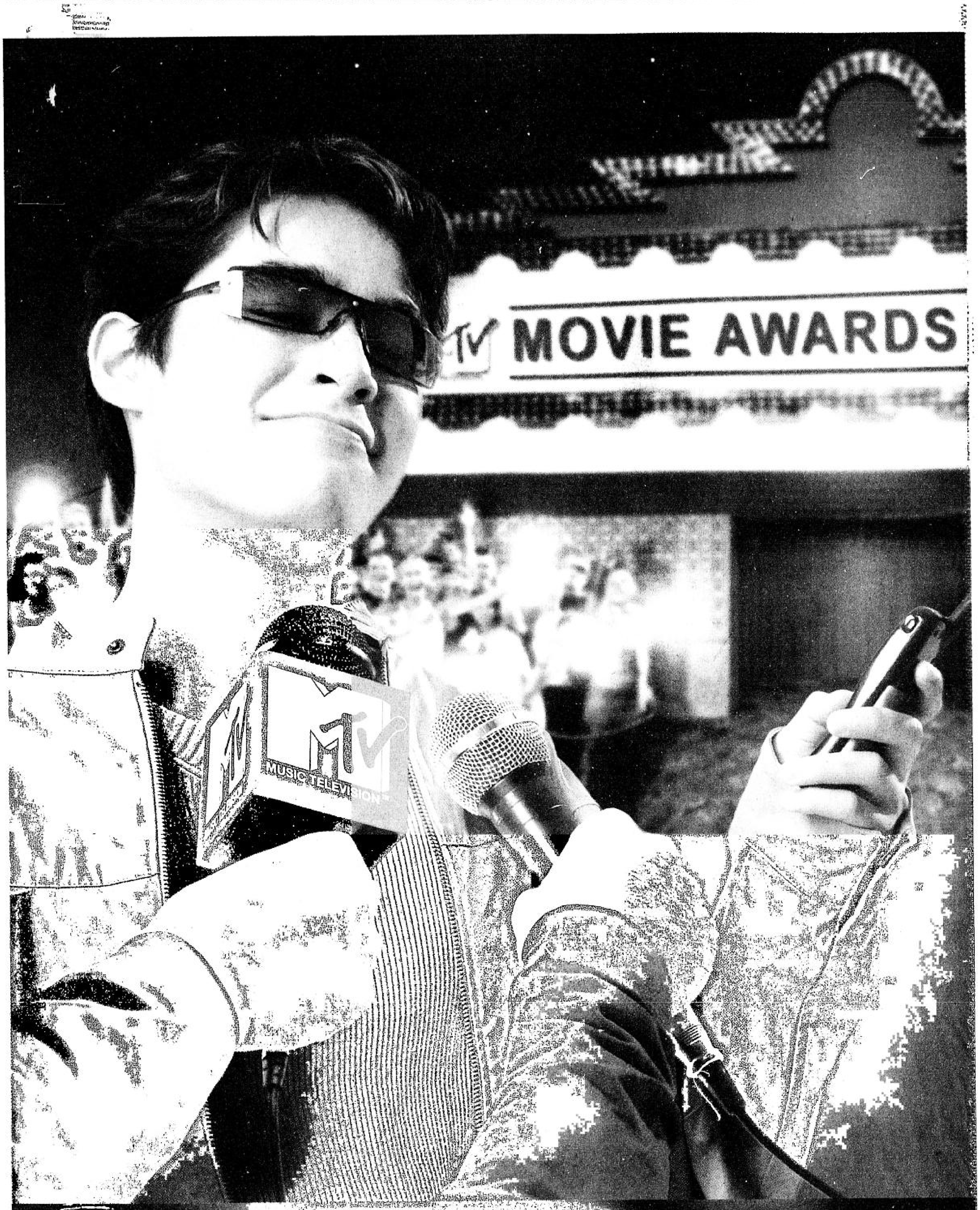

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1. The promo is open to all Globe subscribers and can be accessed using service number 2910. Each text message sent costs ₱2.00 for postpaid & ₱2.50 for prepaid subscribers.
2. To start playing, answer the following question with T or F and send to 2910:
   "True or False, Jim Carrey has won 9 MTV Movie Awards?"
3. Register by typing <answer> <full name> <complete address> <age> and send to 2910. Ex: T Mike Ang 1-A 3rd St Pque 22
4. Registration is one time only and is free of charge. Only registered participants can win. Registration is one name per cellphone number only.
5. For instructions, the subscriber can type in HELP MTV and send to 2910.
6. Trivia questions will be sent until you stop answering. To continue playing, subscribers must type MTV and send to 2910.
7. You get 10 points for every correct answer.
8. To check your earned points, type POINTS & send to 2910.
9. Prizes

   Daily
   There will be 5 daily winners of MTV merchandise based on the top scorers of the day.
   1st Top Scorer — VCD
   2nd Top Scorer — VCD Bag
   3rd Top Scorer — Disk FM Radio
   4th Top Scorer — MTV T-shirt
   5th Top Scorer — Tumbler

   Weekly
   There will be 3 weekly winners for 3 weeks of a Nokia 6100 or Samsung phone. Highest scorer from 12:00am Monday to 11:59pm Sunday will be the weekly winner.

   Grand Prize
   There will be four grand prize winners of free round trip tickets to LA plus pocket money to watch the MTV Movie Awards. The 4 overall top scorers from 12am, April 27 of day 1 to 11:59pm, May 18 of the last day of the promo period win the grand prize.

   Grand prize winners who want to avail of the trip should have an existing passport and US Visa and must be ready to leave for L.A. on or before May 29, 2003. Grand prize is convertible to cash in the amount of ₱95,000.
11. 20% Tax for Prizes exceeding ₱10,000 shall be shouldered by MTV Philippines.
12. In case of a tie, the subscriber who attained the top score first based on logged time as indicated in the database is determined as the winner.
13. Daily and weekly determination of winners will be done every Monday at the 3rd Floor, 7823 Makati Finance Bldg., Makati Avenue, Makati City, at 5:00pm witnessed by a DTI Representative. Grand prize winners will be determined on May 19, 2003 at the same venue and time.
14. All winners shall be notified via a call to their mobile phones and by registered mail.
15. Participants can win only once for the daily and weekly prize during the entire promo period. However, he/she can still win the grand prize.
16. Winners from Metro Manila may claim their prizes at MTV Philippines with address at 33F, Citibank Tower, Valero St., Legazpi Village, Makati. To claim, winners must bring a valid ID together with the registered mail and the winning SIM card.
18. Provincial winners will receive their prizes via courier service.
19. Prizes must be claimed within 60 days from receipt of registered mail notification. All unclaimed prizes after the 60 day period will be forfeited with prior approval of DTI.
20. Promo is available Nationwide.
21. All employees of Globe /MTV/ Tetra Technologies, Inc. up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining this promo.

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Further oil price cuts seen this month

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CONSUMER welfare advocate Raul Concepcion yesterday said local petroleum pump prices were expected to go down by a total of P1 a liter in May as some oil companies hinted that there would be another round of price cuts following those of last Monday.

The oil firms reduced prices of gasoline by 30 centavos a liter and those of diesel and kerosene by 20 centavos.

Concepcion, who chairs the Consumer and Oil Price Watch, said in a statement that since the average price reduction on Monday was 24 centavos a liter, pump prices should be cut further by 76 centavos.

He said that in his April 29 meeting with Pilipinas Shell Petroleum, he had shown that the price cuts should be 40 centavos in the first week of May and 60 centavos in the third week.

He said that Shell, while protecting proprietary information, had furnished COPW documents that provided data on freight rates and premium on Dubai crude prices.

Last month, Concepcion—who regularly comes out with consumer advisories on how much and when oil prices should change—said he was no longer able to validate whether actual price adjustments wear reasonable or not.

COPW and the oil firms had been engaged in a word war with both sides publishing advertorials in major newspapers. The oil firms had said that Concepcion's computations were erroneous and unrealistic.

But yesterday, Concepcion said his meeting with Shell enabled him to update his cost computations from September 2002 to March 2003 to reflect increases in freight rates and premiums.

Virginia Ruivivar, Petron's public affairs manager, said Monday's price cuts were part of a series of downward adjustments that the company would be implementing in May.

Ruivivar said the reductions reflected the decrease in international crude prices.

Meanwhile, officials of Shell and Caltex said they could not tell yet whether prices would go down further this month.

But Robert Kanapi, Shell general manager for external affairs, said the downward trend in crude prices was continuing.

Fernando Martinez, president of the New Petroleum Players Association, said pricing for the rest of May depended on how the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries could check declining prices.

INDICATORS

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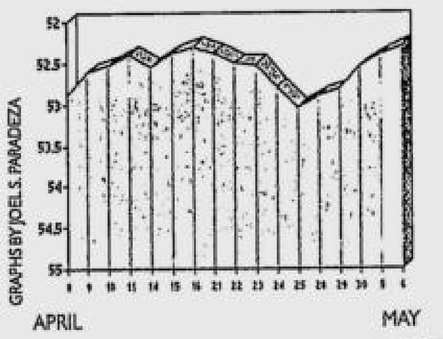


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P52.30 = $1
As of 5 p.m., May 6, 2003

¥118.37 = $1
As of 5 p.m., May 6, 2003

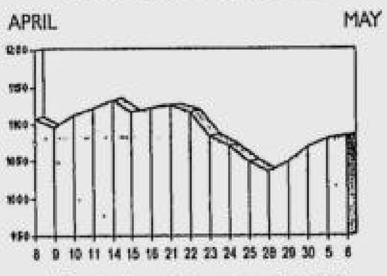
GOLD: $343.00-343.50
per ounce Hong Kong, May 6, 2003

United States	Dollar	0.885897	1.000000	52.301000
Japan	Yen	0.007471	0.008433	0.441100
United Kingdom	Pound	1.423281	1.606600	84.026800
Hongkong	Dollar	0.113594	0.128225	6.706300
Switzerland	Franc	0.660230	0.745268	38.978300
Canada	Dollar	0.627806	0.708667	37.064000
Singapore	Dollar	0.504468	0.569444	29.782500
Australia	Dollar	0.561832	0.634196	33.169100
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.350045	2.652731	138.740500
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.236239	0.266667	13.947000
Brunei	Dollar	0.503036	0.567827	29.697900
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000104	0.000117	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.020781	0.023458	1.226900
UAE	Dirham	0.241205	0.272272	14.240100
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.128800	59.037400
Argentina	Peso	0.316958	0.357782	18.712400
Brazil	Real	0.296386	0.334560	17.497800
Denmark	Kroner	0.134686	0.152033	7.951500
India	Rupee	0.018769	0.021186	1.108000
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.233162	0.263193	13.765300
Mexico	New Peso	0.086937	0.098135	5.132600
New Zealand	Dollar	0.501583	0.566187	29.612100
Norway	Kroner	0.126794	0.143125	7.485600
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015353	0.017331	0.906400
South Africa	Rand	0.122381	0.138144	7.225100
Korea	Won	0.000729	0.000823	0.043000
Sweden	Kroner	0.110101	0.124282	6.500100
Syria	Pound	0.021093	0.023810	1.245300
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025530	0.028818	1.507200
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000555	0.000627	0.032800

STOCK MARKET

Stocks up slightly

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

STOCKS closed mildly higher yesterday in light trade as investors eased on the accumulation of stocks while waiting for more first-quarter earnings results from blue chip firms.

Traders said some players were also waiting for the government's announcement on the economy's performance in the first quarter due out later in the month.

The Philippine composite index bounced back from losses in midtrade to end up 3.64 points, or 0.34 percent higher at 1,084.01 points.

The index has risen 4.6 percent in the last four sessions to yesterday, with its gains for the year now at 6.44 percent.

"The market is just consolidating," said Allan Araullo, vice president at Regina Capital Development Corp. "It is moving sideways in a narrow range. Investors are waiting for the first quarter company results and GDP."

STOCKS/ B2

Gov't sells P3.5B worth of 7-year bonds at 11.875%

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT successfully sold P3.5 billion worth of 7-year bonds yesterday at a rate considerably lower than previous yields, a trend that the Bureau of Treasury said could be sustained in the coming auctions.

Offers for the seven-year papers reached P8.58 billion, indicating a strong demand after the Treasury rejected all bids for the same tenor last April 15 when bids ranged from 12.625 percent to 15 percent.

In November 2002, the coupon rate for the seven-year bonds stood at 15.625 percent.

"Rates are on the downtrend in the near term due to positive factors like the stable foreign exchange, a slowing inflation and improving revenue collections," Deputy Treasurer Eduardo Mendiola said.

He added that the fixed-income market needed a fresh supply of seven-year bonds and the demand pushed the rates down.

Mendiola said the government would take advantage of the favorable environment to tap the local market for more funds.

The government is scheduled to issue at least P20 billion worth of three- and five-year retail bonds in June and may sell another P4 billion worth of fixed-rate promissory notes a month later.

"We have started to lay down the groundwork for the RTBs. We plan to auction it and banks that could underwrite the bonds have

GOV'T/ B2

PRIVATE companies are taking the necessary precautions against the possible spread of the killer SARS virus. Medical personnel conduct a temperature check on a shareholder attending the annual meeting of San Miguel Corp.'s stockholders on Monday at the Shangri-la Edsa Plaza Hotel in Mandaluyong. JOHNNY VILLENA

FATF cancels Manila meet due to SARS

THE ASIA Pacific Group meeting of the Financial Action Task Force scheduled for May 26 in Manila was cancelled because of the SARS scare, according to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

Last month, the 7th Asean Finance Ministers Meeting to be held for the first time in the Philippines was also scrapped due to concerns over the SARS outbreak.

Buenaventura said the FATF would, however, proceed with its regular meeting in June.

The country's removal from the list of countries tagged by the FATF as uncooperative in the fight against money laundering is not likely to take place in the June meeting.

The Philippines has been in the FATF's list since year 2000. The country avoided economic sanctions from the global watchdog when Congress passed the amendments to

FATF/ B3

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Creditors expected to approve transfer of Napocor debts in June

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A MAJOR obstacle in the privatization of the National Power Corp.'s assets will be finally hurdled as multilateral lenders are expected to agree on the transfer of Napocor's debts to Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. by June 3, according to an official of the Asian Development Bank.

Psalm's assumption of Napocor obligations amounting to at least $6 billion is one of the requisites for the long-delayed power sector reforms to proceed.

ADB country director Thomas Crouch said through an e-mail that the debt transfer also needed the consent of the World Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

"(For the ADB's part), the detailed discussions have been concluded in the form of an omnibus transfer agreement for all ADB loans to Napocor," Crouch said.

He said the collective consent of the three lenders could be secured by June.

The official said the power firm had borrowed about $1.2 billion in loans from the ADB, out of which about $600 million remained outstanding.

The transfer of Napocor's debt obligations would pave the way for industry-wide reforms, starting with the privatization of the national power transmission grid.

Psalm president Edgardo del Fonso said in April that due diligence for the transmission system would push through this month as at least nine international power firms had indicated interest in bidding for the concession.

The Psalm chief said investors were expected to avail themselves of the information memorandum on the National Transmission Corp. and secure bidding documents for a non-refundable fee of $5,000.

In January, Del Fonso explained that the privatization would be done in two phases, with the first to cover a concession to operate, maintain, rehabilitate, expand and finance the nationwide high voltage transmission grid.

The bidding winner will not be able to control the systems operation of Transco until the concessionaire obtains from Congress a franchise to do so.

The second phase will begin once the franchise is granted to the concessionaire, which would then take over as operator of the entire country's electricity transmission system.

Del Fonso said the privatization process would take six months, including a period for due diligence.

He said Psalm might award the concession to the winning bidder by July.

SkyCable, 2 others deny GMA-7 monopoly charges

By Abigail L. Ho

CABLE operators SkyCable Central CATV Inc., Philippine Home Cable Holdings Inc. and Pilipino Cable Corp. have denied monopoly and signal distortion charges made by broadcasting firm GMA Network Inc. in a complaint filed with the National Telecommunications Commission last week.

SkyCable senior legal counsel Gerardo Ramiro said in a news briefing yesterday that while the three cable firms had a combined share of around 70 percent in the Metro Manila cable television market, only 10 percent of the two million households with television sets had subscribed to any one of the three cable systems.

SkyCable assistant vice president for marketing Jennifer Joy Santos added that other than SkyCable, Home Cable and Sun Cable in Antipolo, there were a lot of other cable operators servicing the Mega Manila area.

She explained that the three cable operators' dominance in the market "could not be construed as a monopoly" as it was merely a result of their efforts to expand their hold of the market and not to eat it up in its entirety.

GMA Network on April 29 filed an administrative complaint with the NTC accusing the three cable firms of monopoly and signal distortion.

In the complaint, the three cable firms were said to have a commanding 71-percent share of the Mega Manila market consisting of Metro Manila and nearby provinces Rizal, Laguna, Cavite and Bulacan.

SAN Miguel Corp. and Ginebra San Miguel chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco and SMC president and Ginebra San Miguel director Ramon S. Ang preside over the stockholders meeting of the hard liquor company.

Ginebra to spend ₱2B for new bottling plant

By Doris C. Dumlao

GINEBRA San Miguel Inc. (GSM Inc.), formerly La Tondeña Distillers Inc., is set to spend about P2 billion to build a new facility that will boost its bottling capacity by 20 million cases per year.

Ramon Ang, GSM director and president of parent firm San Miguel Corp., told reporters after GSM's stockholders meeting yesterday that the hard liquor manufacturer would build the new bottling plant in Batangas in the next two years.

Ang said GSM would also join parent firm SMC in building new manufacturing facilities in seven targeted Asia-Pacific countries—Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Taiwan, South China and Australia.

The SMC chief also said GSM would focus on selling more products abroad, especially in Europe where hard liquor was more acceptable than beer. He said GSM was now negotiating with potential partners to help penetrate the European market.

During the stockholders meeting, GSM and SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. said GSM was also determined to bring its products to other Asian markets.

"Our initial success in developing a fruit-based liquor, Celavi, for Korea, provides us access to new export markets through tolling arrangements, entailing minimal operating and financial risk," Cojuangco said.

Court junks thrift bank's TRO petition on VAT

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE QUEZON City Regional Trial Court Branch 215 yesterday denied the motion of Real Bank Inc. seeking a temporary restraining order on the imposition of the value-added tax on financial institutions.

Late last month, Real Bank asked the court to declare unconstitutional Sections 105 and 108 of the National Internal Revenue Code and BIR regulations providing the imposition of a 10-percent VAT on financial institutions.

"To issue a TRO at this stage will preempt the outcome of the main case (the unconstitutionality of the revenue/tax code) resulting to pre-judgment," Judge Maria Padilla said.

The judge also noted that the Bureau of Internal Revenue's issuance last April 24 of a revenue memo waiving penalties on financial institutions that underpay the VAT lent to the "lack of credence" in the issuance of the TRO.

Glass firm seeks tariff cover

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ASAHI Glass Co. Ltd. of Japan is asking the Philippine government for increased tariff cover and quota restrictions on imports of figured glass and glass mirror imports.

Asahi told the Department of Trade and Industry, which has initiated the probe on Asahi's plea for safeguard measures, that the domestic industry's sales plunged 72 percent from 1997 to 2002 while the market share of glass imports swelled from 11 percent to 28 percent during the same period.

Asahi claimed that as a result of the influx of glass imports, the domestic industry's production capacity declined from 768,000 cases in 1997 to 434,000 in 2002. To shore up its case, Asahi said that industry profits shrunk; production costs escalated, and employment was reduced substantially.

Under the country's safeguard measures, petitioners must prove that their businesses have incurred losses and that this was directly the result of unfair competition posed by imports.

Asahi accused the imports sources of price undercutting and dumping or selling their products at prices substantially lower than their home market price.

Figured glass products—used for windows, partitions, screens, doors and fluorescent fixtures—come from China, Thailand and South Africa. Glass mirrors—used for wardrobe doors, bathroom furniture, projection screens, display cases, decorative wall fixtures and ceiling and pillar cases—come from China, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand and Korea.

Gov't sells ₱3.5B worth . . .

From page B1

to win through the auction," Mendiola said.

State-owned Land Bank of the Philippines and Development Bank of the Philippines are tasked as issue managers with a firm underwriting commitment to sell at least P10 billion worth of debt papers.

The Treasury earlier said it might cancel some P20 billion worth of treasury bond floats starting November if it could raise at least P60 billion from the sale of retail bonds.

Of the P198.55 billion in net borrowings this year, the government would have to raise only P95.28 billion from the foreign markets and the rest from local sources.

The government has sold more than P100 billion worth of retail bonds since May 2001. Last year, P23.27 billion worth of three-year and P39.66 billion worth of five-year RTBs were sold in June.

The government floated P15.6 billion worth of 4-year RTBs in May 2001 and another P22.4-billion worth of three-and-a-half bonds in November.

To be sold in cuts of P5,000, a retail investor can buy the risk-free bonds with a minimum of P5,000 but not exceeding P2 million.

Stocks up slightly

From page B1

Turnover slid to P185.9 million from P294.7 million on Monday. Although the main index rose, there were more losers than gainers, 27 to 20, while 28 issues were unchanged.

"The light turnover is a sign that the market is just pausing," Araullo said.

Traders said the market was likely to consolidate further, at least for the rest of the week.

Oil refiner Petron Corp. led the gainers, climbing 1.9 percent to P2.14 on hopes of healthy profits in the first quarter when oil prices were rising due to the Iraq war.

Bank of the Philippine Islands, the country's second biggest lender, led the losers, falling 1.3 percent to P38. It accounted for about 20 percent of the total market volume.

Dominant food and beverage group San Miguel Corp. closed unchanged at P57 while its "B" shares lost 0.75 percent to P66. *Reuters*

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CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	-	1,400,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,500,000
Baguio Country Club	600,000	730,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	70,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	110,000
Camp John Hay	200,000	220,000
Canlubang	400,000	500,000
Canyonwoods	-	150,000
Capitol Hills	120,000	135,000
Celebrity Sports Club	160,000	180,000
Club Filipino	110,000	180,000
Evercrest "A"	-	80,000
Forest Hills "A"	150,000	185,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	190,000
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	200,000	250,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	200,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	12,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	10,100,000	10,600,000
Manila Polo	-	2,450,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	450,000	500,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	540,000	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	600,000
Metropolitan Club "A"	90,000	135,000
Metropolitan Club "B"	-	135,000
Mimosa (Individual)	-	120,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	260,000	300,000
Montemar (Individual)	35,000	-
Mt. Malarayat (Individual)	-	300,000
Mt. Malarayat (Corporate)	-	500,000
Puerto Azul	-	100,000
Quezon City Sports Club	-	190,000
Rockwell	-	380,000
Royale Tagaytay "A"	-	Please Call
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	75,000
Sherwood Hills "B"	80,000	180,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	200,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,250,000	1,500,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,800,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	250,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	350,000	400,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	820,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	720,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	125,000	165,000
Valley Golf	260,000	270,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	-	6,600,000

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 6, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16	16	15.75	16	8,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	38.5	38.5	38	38	965,400
China Banking Corp.	665	665	665	665	1,250
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	25	26	25	25.5	225,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28	28.5	28	28.5	51,300
Philippine National Bank	25	25	24.75	24.75	13,800
Security Bank Corp.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	65,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.25	17.75	17.25	17.75	38,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Filipino Fund Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	30,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1345	1355	1345	1355	160
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1000	1030	1000	1025	1,500
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	9,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0.76	0.76	0.73	0.74	2,950,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	1	1	1	1	10,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	560	570	560	570	3,550
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	3,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	1,800,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.31	3,430,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	392.5	395	387.5	390	34,730
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	11,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	52,000
Manila Electric Co. B	10.25	10.25	10	10	852,300
Petron Corp.	2.08	2.14	2.08	2.14	6,275,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.46	1.48	160,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.44	2.5	2.44	2.5	981,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.55	0.56	920,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	15,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30.5	30.5	30	30	26,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.5	16.5	15.75	16	383,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57	56.5	57	97,500
San Miguel Corp. B	66.5	66.5	66	66	56,600
Universal Robina Corp.	4	4	3.8	4	8,049,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4	4.15	4	4.1	2,341,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.32	2.4	2.3	2.4	58,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	1,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	50,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	5,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.225	0.225	0.215	0.215	3,090,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	1,000,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.2	8.3	8.1	8.1	158,000
Ionics Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.64	0.65	340,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.46	1.46	75,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	150,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.57	320,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	450,000
Music Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	880,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	1,300,000
Roxas Holdings Inc	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	20,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.96	2	1.92	1.98	278,000
Spi Technologies Inc.	17	17	16.5	17	233,600
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	50,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	100,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	600,000
Mondragon Intl Phils, Inc	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	150,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	20,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series Cc	10	10	10	10	1,000
Property					
Ayala Land Inc.	5	5.1	5	5	630,000
Cyber Bay Corp	0.19	0.19	0.14	0.15	17,310,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	200,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	850,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.88	0.9	0.88	0.9	12,980,000
SM Development Corp.	1.12	1.14	1.12	1.14	45,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	4.9	4.95	4.9	4.95	1,544,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	10,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.195	0.195	0.19	0.19	100,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	1,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.0046	0.005	0.0044	0.0048	89,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	20,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	1,000,000
Interport Res.	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	6,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	11,000,000

SHARES	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,404,210	48,465,725.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	53,005,280	111,210,375.00
PRO	33,559,000	25,284,880.00
Mining	90,630,000	730,950.00
OIL	18,000,000	58,400.00
GRAND TOTALS:	196,598,490	185,750,330.00
AVERAGES		
Bank & Fin Svc.	378.23	DOWN 0.27
Comm'l & Ind'l.	1,578.83	UP 5.04
PRO	447.19	UP 4.47
Mining	1,150.27	DOWN 0.59
OIL	1.19	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	675.89	UP 3.77
Composite	1,084.01	UP 3.64

NO. OF ADVANCES: 20; NO. OF DECLINES: 27; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 28; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 75; NO. OF TRADES: 1,449

DISCLOSURES

PHILODRILL Corp. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from May 28 to June 25.

* * *

VULCAN Industrial & Mining Corp. announced the appointment of Patrick Caoile as the company's compliance officer.

* * *

DESIGNATED independent directors of Philcomsat Holdings Corp. were Oliverio Laperal and Ronaldo Salonga.

* * *

MATSUSHITA Electric Philippines Corp. declared cash dividends of P0.20 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of May 30. Payments will be made on June 26 and July 29 for class A and class B shares, respectively.

* * *

MBF Inc. will hold its special stockholders' meeting on June 11, 10 a.m. at the 25/F of Philamlife Building, Makati City. Record date is on May 19.

* * *

CONCRETE Aggregates Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 20, 8 a.m. at the 9/F, boardroom of Ortigas Building, Ortigas Avenue cor. Meralco Avenue.

* * *

ELECTED directors of San Miguel Corp. were Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., Ramon Ang, Estelito Mendoza, Manuel Cojuangco, Inigo Zobel, Corazon de la Paz, Winston Garcia, Leo Alvez, Pacifico Fajardo, Hector Hofileña, Menardo Jimenez, Juan Santos, Shigeki Ota, Naomichi Asano and Henry Sy Sr.

* * *

IMPERIAL Resources Inc. will increase its authorized capital stock from P700 million to P4 billion divided into 560 million class A common shares and 240 million class B common shares, both with par value of P5.

* * *

ELECTED directors of Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. were Arthur Vy Ty, Henry Sun, Francisco Sebastian, Gabriel Chua, Paul Cuyegkeng, Felipe Alfonso, Cielito Habito, Renato Valencia, James Go, Antonio Abacan Jr., Placido Mapa Jr. and George Ty.

* * *

SM Development Corp. declared cash dividends of P0.05 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of May 29. The dividends are payable on June 25. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

INTEREST RATES

May 06, 2003-MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 6-May-03 (%)	MART1 5-May-03 (%)
1 Month	7.8283	8.117
3 Months	8.1	8.2182
6 Months	8.7409	8.8523
1 Year	9.2558	9.5481
2 Years	9.6481	9.7404
3 Years	10.4231	10.5115
4 Years	11.2	11.2673
5 Years	11.5635	11.6785
7 Years	12.1942	12.3712
10 Years	12.9038	12.9327
20 Years	13.2865	13.4019
25 Years	13.7962	13.95

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

No US trip for publisher

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

OUR favorite publisher and his travel companion have told organizers they will no longer join the President's US state visit, following Malacañang's denial of their request to be included in the White House dinner as part of the official delegation.

The publisher, according to the grapevine, had even lobbied for his and his travel buddy's inclusion with President Macapagal-Arroyo herself, after the two had been informed that the most that the state visit planners could do for them would be to squeeze them in the adjoining Blair House reception.

The simultaneous dinner at the Blair House would be tendered for the Cabinet ladies, who, after dinner, would be ushered into the White House to join the two heads of state for the traditional post-prandial show and dance.

The publisher had already sent word, after news of his request for special accommodation came out in this space on Friday, that he and his companion were dropping from the trip altogether.

Too bad, since the inclusion of the traveling duo would have ensured a favorable Page 1 story and photo display for the US trip, with no less than the publisher writing a first person account of the White House encounter.

Already, mischievous editorial talk is already betting that the story would include this line: "I told Bush...."

No. 1 at 25

AFTER laboring under the shadows of CAP and Philam Plans, CAP most especially for years, Prudentialife has finally snatched the king-of-the-hill title for the first quarter of the year.

According to industry figures, Prudentialife's first-quarter share of the competitive pre-need market is now 21.14 percent, as against Philam Plans' 20.23 percent.

Longtime market leader CAP, now hobbled by its Fil-Estate/MRT investments, is a far third at 11.34 percent.

Prudentialife is incidentally celebrating its 25th year this week.

Day-to-day management of Prudentialife is now in the hands of Jose Alberto Alba, the driven young son of Prudentialife founder Frank Alba, who gave up active management after being appointed ambassador to the Vatican by the President.

Nikki's new love

NIKKI Coseteng has a new passion.

Together with friend Alex Limjoco, the former senator has been market-testing a dinner-only restaurant concept in the ancestral Coseteng house in Baguio.

The yet-unnamed restaurant was open to invited guests/customers during the Holy Week and Labor Day weekends, offering different buffets every night. Filipino artists and a cultural group provided the aural and visual feast.

Coseteng is headhunting for a partner/manager to operate the venture since she herself admits going up to the city only occasionally.

The post-war Coseteng house is a stone's throw from the Mansion House and is sandwiched by the Little Flower Novitiate and the vacation home of heart surgeon Jorge Garcia.

The neighborhood still retains the wooded charm of the old Baguio, and the restaurant's dining area, which is actually the verandah behind, could be Pines City's version of Antonio's of Tagaytay with its expansive tree-dotted vista.

Diplomatic license

THE NEGATIVE publicity campaign against Ambassador to Washington Albert del Rosario over his proposal to sell pieces of idle/disintegrating government property in the United States is being orchestrated from the PR office of a financial empire controlled, ironically, by a former ambassador.

Heard through the grapevine

FORMER PDIC chair Norberto Nazareno is being tipped as the incoming chair/CEO of the sequestered Cocobank, vice Edward Go.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

1ST QUARTER

Meralco sales jump 9.3%

By Doris C. Dumlao

MANILA Electric Co. posted a 9.3-percent growth in sales volume in the first quarter of 2003 compared with the year-ago level. It, likewise, reported a reduction in systems losses indicating improved performance during the period.

Analysts said the increase in Meralco's sales volume indicated an improvement in economic activity during the quarter.

"It could be the low base effect (from a year ago) coming from the Sept. 11 event but manufacturing output also suggested that industrial demand was healthy," Team Research analyst Jomar Lacson said.

Loss of confidence in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the US in September 2001 dampened global industrial productivity in the succeeding months.

In the first quarter of 2001, Meralco's sales to residential customers stood at 1.76 billion kilowatt-hour; commercial, 1.75 billion kWh, and industrial, 1.47 billion kWh.

With the sales volume increase, Meralco's profit is seen to improve in the first quarter of this year compared with the P72.8 million posted a year ago.

However, Meralco, which incurred P2 billion in losses last year, told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday it would not be able to report its net income for the period yet due to the adjustments that would have to be made in line with the Supreme Court's order to refund its customers some P28 billion in excess charges.

Other officials said Meralco might even end up in the red for the whole year due to these adjustments.

In view of the April 30, 2003 decision of the Supreme Court rejecting Meralco's motion for consideration of the refund order, the company is currently adjusting its first quarter financial statements "to reflect the pending refund to customers as a liability and to recognize losses as a result of the refund and a rollback of rates."

In the meantime, Meralco said its systems loss level in the first quarter improved to 11.2 percent from 13.2 percent in the same period last year.

Systems loss is incurred from pilferage of electricity by nonpaying consumers and technical problems.

Meralco is currently pursuing a comprehensive debt restructuring with various creditors due to its tight cash flows.

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Pre-need firms post 25% drop in 3-month sales

By Elena R. Torrijos

TOTAL sales of pre-need companies based on gross contract price fell 25 percent in the first quarter of this year to P7.99 billion from P10.65 billion in the same period last year, data from the Securities and Exchange Commission showed.

Pension plans turned out to be the worst performing product line of pre-need companies as sales dropped 37.79 percent to P3.95 billion from P6.355 billion last year.

Education plans followed as sales of this type of plan dropped 10.4 percent to P3.4 billion from P3.79 billion.

Sales of life or so-called memorial plans, however, grew 27 percent to P639.4 million from P503.46 million.

Philam Plans Inc. was No. 1 in sales of pension plans with P952.62 million. For education plans Prudentialife Plans Inc. of the Alba family took the top slot with sales of P1.07 billion and it also registered the highest sales of life plans among pre-need companies with P147 million during the period.

Meanwhile, total initial collections of pre-need companies also fell 12.4 percent to P808 million in the quarter from P922.4 million primarily because of the 28.89-percent decline in initial collections of pension plans.

In terms of number of plans, sales of pre-need plan companies dropped 17.17 percent to 137,402 plans sold against P165,892 recorded in the same period last year.

Pension plans accounted for roughly half of the total sold at 70,773 plans, 24.09 percent lower than the number of pension plans sold last year.

Education plans also saw a drop in demand as the number of such plans purchased by the public fell 27 percent to 40,144 from 55,113.

Again, sales of life plans were resilient and even surged 50.89 percent to 26,485 plans sold in the first quarter against 17,552 in the comparative period in 2002.

BOI investments up 25.5% in 3 mos

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE BOARD of Investments reported healthy investment inflows in the first quarter this year amid rising concerns on the Iraq war and the killer SARS virus.

The combined investments by the BOI and its

BOI/B5

FATF cancels ...

From page B1

the Anti-Money Laundering Act days before the March 15 deadline.

The FATF will still have to evaluate actual performance here to ensure that the law is being enforced before removing the country from the list. This process is expected to take 12 to 24 months, Buenaventura said.

The implementing rules and regulations governing the amended law on money laundering are still being finalized. *Clarissa S. Batino*

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Mother's Day treats at the SM Supermalls

TREAT mom to a day of fun, fashion and festivities as the SM Supermalls celebrate Mother's Day on Sunday, May 11.

Take time out to choose that special token of love for her at the different stores, shops, and boutiques at the malls. Or treat her to a family lunch or dinner at her favorite restaurant. Mom, after all, deserves the best.

Watch moms in style on the fashion runway featuring the clothes of Essenxa at the SM Department Store. Mom will not only enjoy the great clothes, but will get a 20-percent discount coupon during the event.

Or pamper her with a beauty makeover wherein beauty experts will give her tips for an exciting new look. Both activities will take place at 3 p.m. on May 9 at SM Southmall, May 10 at SM City Fairview, May 11 at SM City Bicutan and SM City Manila, May 13 at SM City Bacoor, and May 14 at SM Megamall.

Mom can also hone her cooking skills in the "Basta Maggi, Wagi ang Luto ni Mommy" cooking demonstration. Sponsored by Maggi, this will take place on May 8 at SM City Fairview, May 9 at SM City Bacoor, May 10 at SM City North-Edsa, May 11 at SM City Bicutan, and May 13 at SM Megamall. All activities begin at 2 p.m.

Active and athletic moms can also get bowled over at the SM Bowling Centers and receive a free gift for every four games played.

Moreover, today's hottest young stars will serenade Mom with sweet songs to warm her heart in "A Tribute to Mom". These include Lani Revilla with sons Jolo Revilla on May 9 at SM Southmall and Bryan Revilla at SM City Bicutan, and Annabelle Rama with Richard Gutierrez on May 11 at SM City Manila and May 14 at SM Megamall.

Meanwhile, make mom's day truly "fun-tastic" at Storyland, the country's most exciting indoor theme park.

Pamper her with free beauty makeovers, a luxurious foot spa, a stylish haircut, and free beauty products in the Mommy Fair. Sponsored by Cream Silk, Avon, Salon de Rose, and David's Salon, this will take place on May 10 and 11 at both Storyland parks at 2 p.m.

Whip up something special for mom as chefs from the San Miguel Culinary Group delight guests with sumptuous recipes for Mom in Storyland's Cooking Demo at 2 p.m. at Storyland SM Southmall on May 10 and Storyland SM City Fairview on May 11.

Storyland's well-loved characters Ellie, Lionel, Sgt. March, and Eggbert join mom in a weekend of fun filled with musical and dance numbers, and loads of fun, games, prizes and surprises. Showtime will begin at 2 p.m. on May 10 and 11 at Storyland in Southmall and Fairview.

Mom can cap the day by getting into the groove, an interactive afternoon of dancing and fun with a performance by the kids from Kids at Play, a center for arts and development. This will take place on May 17 at Storyland SM Southmall and on May 18 at Storyland SM City Fairview. The fun begins at 3 p.m.

Nestle's new technical director

NESTLE Philippines Inc. has appointed John Samuel Jessup as its new executive vice president and technical director effective March 1 this year. An Australian, Jessup has extensive experience in technical management, having assumed various senior technical posts in Nestle companies in Switzerland, Australia, South Africa, and Malaysia, which gave him valuable exposure in the areas of food, chocolate and confectionery, and coffee. Before being assigned at Nestle Philippines, he was technical manager for chocolate and confectionery at the Nestle headquarters in Switzerland. Prior to his Switzerland stint, he was production director for Nestle Foods in Malaysia. Jessup, 56, has had 35 years of experience with Nestle, having joined the group in 1967 as technical trainee for Nestle Australia.

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INVITATION TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC) invites prequalified/accredited contractors to submit sealed bids for the **JANITORIAL AND GENERAL MANPOWER SERVICES FOR PNOC EC ENERGY SUPPLY BASE (BX 03-659).**

Tender Documents shall be available for issuance at the above address from the Operations Services Group (c/o Mr. George N. Alejandro and Mr. Carlos L. Mejias) from **May 7 to 21, 2003**, upon presentation of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS: Three Hundred (PHP 300.00).

Sealed bids shall be received by the Contracts Administration not later than **2:00 o'clock p.m. of May 30, 2003 at PNOC EC Conference Room, Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Ft. Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila and then publicly opened at 2:15 p.m.** of the same date.

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **May 23, 2003, 10:00 a.m. at PNOC EC Conference Room, Energy Supply Base, Mainaga, Mabini, Batangas.**

The public bidding shall incorporate the electronic bid submission, using the ITBF system.

PNOC EC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, or to accept such bids or to award any part thereof to any bidder/s whose bid/s is/are considered most advantageous to PNOC EC.

This publication is also posted at DBM Website: www.procurementservices.net

(Sgd.) **RUFINO B. BOMASANG**
President and CEO

(PDI - May 7, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region X, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City
Tel. No. (088)8552721 Fax No. (088)8552723

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA)** Region X invites all interested parties to register and apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the following projects:

Location	Project	Approved Budget	Calendar days for Completion
Sector A:			
Baraas, Iligan City	Reroofing and repainting of warehouse (100,000 cav. cap.)	2,000,000.00	90
Baloy, CDO	Reroofing, repair and repainting of warehouse (100,000 cav. cap.)	2,273,000.00	90
Patag, CDO	Reroofing, repair and repainting of warehouse (50,000 cav. cap.)	1,141,985.26	60
Aglayan, Malaybalay City Bukidnon	Reroofing and repainting of warehouse (50,000 cav. cap.)	1,164,722.81	60
Sector B:			
Trento, Agusan del Sur	Reroofing, repair and repainting of warehouse (100,000 cav. cap.)	1,400,000.00	90
Libertad, Butuan City	Heightening of warehouse flooring (100,000 cav. cap.)	1,100,000.00	90

Submission of Letter of Intent and eligibility requirements to the RBAC Secretariat c/o **Ms. Emma P. Asiñero**, 2nd Floor Regional Office No. X, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City, shall be made from **May 15-21, 2003** during office hours. Bid documents shall be available for issuance until **June 6-12, 2003** to eligible bidders only or his authorized representative with Special Power of Attorney upon payment of One Thousand Two Hundred (P1,200.00) Pesos per project in the form of Cash or Cashier's Check in favor of the NFA, which is non-refundable.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **July 3, 2003**, 10:00 a.m. for Sector A and 1:00 p.m. for Sector B at the Regional Office Conference Room. Bidders are required to submit their queries in writing to the RBAC Secretariat two (2) days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

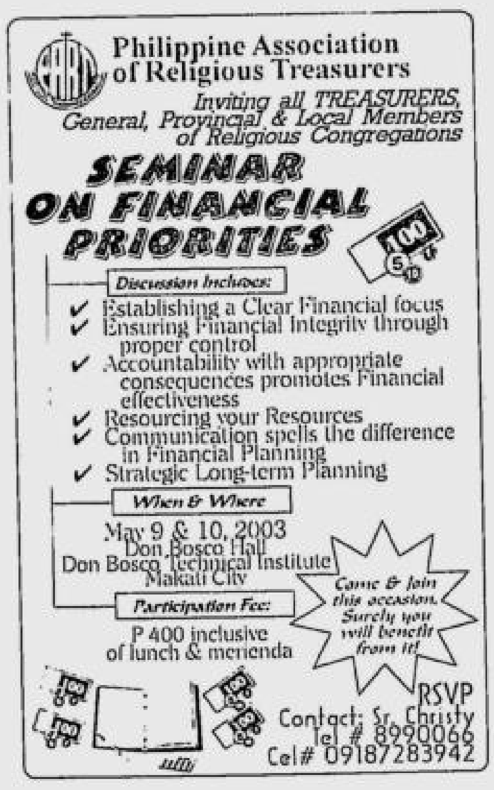
Deadline for the submission of Bid Documents is on **July 18, 2003**, 10:00 a.m., for Sector A and 2:00 p.m. for Sector B, after which the opening of bid envelopes shall immediately follow.

NFA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive any defect or informality, assume no obligation whatsoever or indemnify to the bidder any expense or loss that it may incur in the preparation of its bid, and to accept only such bids or to award to any contractor whose bid is considered most advantageous to the NFA.

APPROVED:

(Sgd.) **FLO G. PASCUAL**
Regional Director

(PDI - May 1 & 7, 2003)



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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Agriculture/Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA/BFAR) invites eligible Boat Builders/Manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the construction and delivery of 35 units 28-footer Patrol Boats made of Fiberglass Reinforce Plastic (FRP) hull, a project under the Bantay Dagat Program, RP-Japan Increased Food Production Program (KR-II).

A Two Envelope System or the Single Stage Bidding Variations shall be adapted which requires bidders to submit their Technical and Financial Proposals separately in two-sealed envelopes. The Technical Proposal shall be opened first and evaluated to determine their conformity with the technical requirements. Bidders shall be evaluated based on the eligibility requirements and Technical Proposal.

Only the Financial Envelopes of the Technically compliant Bidders shall be opened and evaluated further. Financial Envelope of non-compliant bidder shall be returned unopened.

Interested Parties can obtain the eligibility requirements at the Office of the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat at the 7th Floor Arcadia Bldg., 860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Deadline for submission of two (2) copies of eligibility requirements will be on **May 13-14, 2003.**

Bidding document will be made available on **May 16-19, 2003** upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility and upon payment of non-refundable amount of P1,000.00.

Pre-bid Conference will be on **May 21, 2003** at 2:00 PM at the 4/F BFAR Conference Room, Arcadia Bldg., 860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Submission of Technical and Financial Proposals will be on **May 28, 2003** at 1:00 to 1:45 PM at the 4/F BFAR Conference Room.

Opening of Technical Proposal will be on May 28, 2003 at 2:00 PM, 4/F BFAR Conference Room.

Opening of financial proposal on **June 6, 2003**, 4/F BFAR Conference Room.

For local bidders, only duly Licensed and MARINA Accredited Ship builders/Contractors are qualified to participate while for foreign Shipbuilders/Contractors, they must have local counterparts engaged in the construction of fiberglass patrol vessels in the Philippines and should also be licensed/accredited also by MARINA. Shipbuilders with proven design similar to BFAR specifications are given preference.

Failure to comply with requirements shall be the immediate ground for disqualification.

Additional information may be furnished upon request. Please address all communications to the DA/BFAR BAC Chairman, Attention: BAC Secretariat, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, 7th Floor, Arcadia Bldg., 860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City or call telephone Nos. 373-74-45 or 374-55-69.

DA/BFAR reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or informality therein, accept the bid and award the contract to the winning bidder with the most advantageous offer to DA/BFAR. The DA/BFAR assumes no responsibility to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred for the preparation of bids, nor does not guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **CESAR M. DRILON, JR.**
Chairman, DA/BFAR BAC

(PDI – May 7, 2003)

TEACHING WASTE MANAGEMENT TO KIDS

The Nestle Cabuyao factory's Solid Waste Management Program recently spearheaded a waste segregation project in which 520 children from the Botong Elementary School picked up garbage from the school and the shorelines of Laguna de Bay, then segregated them into organic and non-organic wastes. The activity started with a briefing for faculty, parents, barangay officials and students from grades 1 to 6, on the importance of waste segregation. Nestle gave Kitkat or Nestle Éclair candies for every student with a bagful of segregated wastes. The Cabuyao factory also donated garbage cans to the school.

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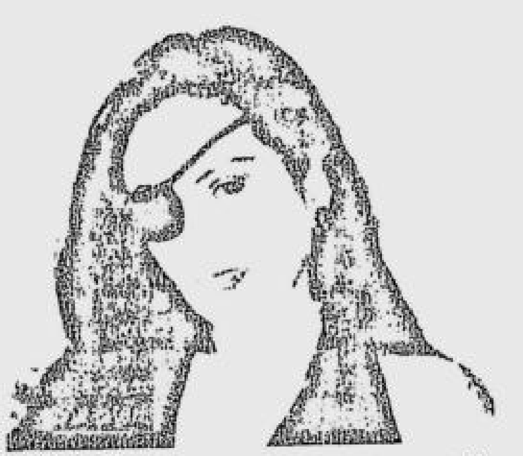
NESTLE VOLUNTEERS VISIT TAHANANG WALANG HAGDAN

Volunteers from the Nestle Ice Cream factory, including Melo union members, recently visited Tahanang Walang Hagdan in Cainta, Rizal to distribute clothes to some 500 disabled residents and their families. The volunteers, led by Luz Tanquintic of HR and Danny Borbon of the Melo Union, also served the residents Maggi Arroz Caldo, Champorado, Chamyto, Nestle Ice Cream and Nestle Lemonade after a tour of the facilities.

Joscephine Gomez at The Podium



SOPRANO Joscephine Gomez will bring an evening of summer inspiration to The Podium as she performs on Saturday, May 10 at 7 p.m. This concert of light classics, Broadway, and pop hits with pianist Carlos Perion will be held at the mall's second level activity center. It is in cooperation with Citylite 88.3.

Broadway pieces for soprano solo are "Some Enchanted Evening", "Climb Every Mountain", and "You'll Never Walk Alone" by Rodgers and Hammerstein, "I Believe" by Drake and Graham, "Leibestraum" by Lizst, and "Jewel Song" (from Faust) by Gounod.

Tenor Jonathan Badon then joins Joscephine in a medley of songs from Andrew Lloyd Weber's "Phantom of the Opera" and David Foster's "The Prayer". Violinist Aleli Cad Olalong and flutist Rodolfo "Odi" Abadier assist in some numbers.

The program winds up with "Il Miro Cuore Va," the Italian translation of James Horner's "My Heart Will Go On" hit from "Titanic."

Joscephine's crystal clear voice, innate vocal expressiveness, and artistic interpretative ability have earned for her the respect and love of audiences in the Philippines and countries like the Federation of Russian Independent States, the United States, Germany, Israel, and Brunei Darussalam. She is the first Filipino soprano to give concerts in the latter two countries.

Joscephine's mother '40s radio singer Josefina Camposagadro Gomez was her first coach and remains her number one critic. She was subsequently trained in voice and the development in musicianship by professors Lilia Reyes, Florencia Nepomuceno, the late Kathy Stenberg, Irma Ponce Enrile Potenciano, and currently Mercedes Dugan.

Likewise, she underwent training under foreign professors Michael Flott of Germany and Anna Rodelskaya of Israel. Josephine attended the voice master classes of Ernst Hoezl of the Hochschule fur Muzik in Graz, Austria, Hanna Ludwig of the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, Eleanor Rona of Austria, John Lester, Herman La Rue, and soprano Donna Zapola of the United States, and Eva Icykowska of the Czech Republic.

She has received numerous awards, including the 1997 Parangal ng Bayan Award for Culture and the Arts, the 2000 Gintong Sikap Award for Professional Achievement, and the 2003 Blue Falcon Award for Culture and the Arts.

Tribute to Ben Arda golf tourney

ALABANG Club 515 will be holding a Tribute to Ben Arda golf tournament on Friday, May 9 in honor of the legendary Filipino golf master at the Alabang Country Club. The tournament is a fund-raising event to provide financial assistance to Ben Arda, now 74 years old and hobbled by a stroke he suffered in the early '90s. The three-time Philippine Open Champion and Asian Circuit Champion in 1970 has been teaching professionally at the Alabang Country Club over the past seven years.

The event is sponsored as an official Club activity by the Alabang Country Club and the golf course will be exclusively for the Ben Arda tournament to enable more of the golf idol's fans and supporters to participate.

The tournament is organized and managed by the Alabang Club 515, a 10-year-old association of 70 golfers from the host club, and is open to all amateur male and lady golfers. Alabang Country Club members are charged P1,500 while non-members are charged P2,500 for tournament participation which will already include green fees, giveaways, raffle prizes as well as food and refreshments during the award ceremonies.

The tournament will be an 18-hole individual stroke play for players with certified NGAP or IPI handicap indices. For players without valid handicap index, the format will be Blind Callaway. Tee-off time is at 6 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

At stake will be Italian-designed trophies for the Low Gross Champion and men's champions and runners-up for Classes A, B and C. There will also be trophies for the Ladies champion and 1st and 2nd runners up. Raffle prizes valued at over P200,000 will also be given away to lucky participants.

Tax on inheritance seminar

DO YOU know how much taxes you will have to pay on properties you have inherited or will inherit or will leave behind to your heirs? And did you know that there are deductions allowed to reduce the estate taxes? You can find out how, and learn how to plan your estate. The AM Management Institute of Taxation (Ammit) holds a seminar on "Tax on Your Inheritance and Planning Your Estate". Also to be discussed are the latest regulations on Estate and Donor's Tax under BIR Revenue Regulations No. 2-2003 released January 2003. The seminar will be on May 10 at the 22nd Floor, Penthouse, BA Lepanto Building, Paseo de Roxas Avenue, Makati City, 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. Call Ammit at 890-8276/895-5909, fax 890-8208.

North Luzon toll fee seen increasing by ₱1 per km

By Michelle V. Remo
and Jun Malig, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*

THE NORTH Luzon Tollway Project, which will be completed in 2005, is expected to develop the country's North Luzon Expressway into a world-class transport infrastructure, but it would also significantly increase the toll fee charged on motorists from the current 26 centavos per kilometer to more than P1.

Jaime Dumlao Jr., executive director of the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB), said ongoing improvements in the entire 84-kilometer North Luzon Expressway stretch included the installation of state-of-the-art facilities such as a computerized traffic monitoring system.

Dumlao said the project contract, which was awarded to Manila North Tollways Corp., allowed MNTC to raise the toll fee to 82 centavos per kilometer to cover the cost of the development, and to include in the fee additional charges for inflation and fluctuations in the peso-dollar rate.

"We would not know the exact toll rate until 2005 when the effects of the inflation and the exchange rate movement on the loan used for the project by the proponents are factored in, but the rate will definitely increase," said Dumlao.

He said that considering inflation and the exchange rate movement, the toll fee would likely be raised to more than P1 per kilometer.

In the meantime, President Macapagal-Arroyo approved the changes in the design of the project's flyover component to give way to a full interchange along the North Luzon Expressway's Dau exit.

The flyover forms part of the $371-million North Luzon Tollway Project.

Mayor Marino Morales, president of the Pampanga Mayors' League, said the President had assured him and other officials on Friday that she would direct the MNTC to revise the original plan of building a flyover in Dau. He said the President would ask MNTC to build a full interchange in the area instead.

The Lopez-controlled MNTC borrowed a total of $371 million, about P18.5 billion, from various foreign financial institutions to undertake the expressway project.

Foreign lenders for the expressway project include the Asian Development Bank, the International Finance Corp. of the World Bank and the Export Finance Corp.

Felipe Aguinaldo, TRB chief for engineering, said that upon completion of the tollway project, the north and southbound roads going to and from Balintawak and Valenzuela would be widened to increase the lanes from three to four.

In the meantime, the road to and from Valenzuela and Burol (the section separating Malolos and Pampanga) will be widened to increase the lanes from two to four, and the road from Burol to Santa Rita, Pampanga will be expanded to three lanes from two.

Dumlao said the government had received opposition to the expected increase in toll rate. He, however, said that motorists should consider the investments made by the proponents.

"We cannot avoid encountering opposition. It has been the usual occurrence every time there is a proposal to increase rates, like what had happened when the Skyway was opened," Dumlao said.

HCPI to stop sedan assembly

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

HONDA Cars Philippines Inc. (HCPI) will import its sub-compact and mid-range sedan models, the City and Accord, from Thailand to focus its assembly of Civic and CR-V in the Philippines.

HCPI marketing deputy head Arnel Doria said Honda would maintain the same volume of production and its current workforce at its Sta. Rosa, Laguna plant even with the shift of the City and Accord from completely knocked down (CKD) assembly to completely built up (CBU) importation.

Doria said the consolidation of its local plant would enable Honda to reduce "downtime" between the mandatory tool changes every time it shifts production from model to model. The downtime has led to considerable losses in production time and contributed to chronic backlog in orders of the CR-V and the Civic.

Doria said concentrating production on two instead of four models would provide economies of scale not only to Honda but also to local automotive parts suppliers. Doria said the plan would also create the critical mass needed to propel the production of a Philippine-made Honda model for export to Asean.

HCPI yesterday launched the new City CBU and it plans to unveil the Accord CBU later this year. HCPI is the second major assembler to shift from CKD to CBU importation since the start of the Asean Free Trade Area, which has spurred vehicle imports in the region with the cut in duties to no more than 5 percent. Mitsubishi Motor Philippines Corp. launched in January the new Lancer model imported from Thailand.

Doria expressed confidence that the City would spark demand for entry-level, 1.3-liter models that dominated the market before the Asian utility vehicles took the Filipino buyers' fancy in 1997.

Observers have questioned HCPI's decision to launch the new City model at this time when Congress was expected to approve reforms in vehicle taxes that would reduce the excise tax on passenger cars from 15 percent to 3 percent. HCPI is targeting sales of 4,000 for the City or slightly over a quarter of its total sales of 19,500 units this year, 43 percent up from last year.

Aside from rationalizing its local assembly operations, Doria said HCPI has also fast-tracked the completion of its global transmission plant which would be completed by July this year. HCPI expects to ship out $35 million worth of transmission worldwide in its first full year of operation.

Feed industry backs Bt corn propagation

THE COUNTRY'S premier organization of veterinarians working in the animal feed industry recently issued a manifesto in support of the government's approval of the domestic propagation of a popular biotechnology-processed corn variety which promises to radically increase farm yield without harming the environment.

The Philippine College of Veterinary Feed Practitioners (PCVFP) told the Arroyo government that the group believed that the use of biotechnology "will provide opportunities and options to small farmers, as well as to the agriculture and food industries to enhance product yield and quality by reducing the use of insecticides in farms."

The group also noted that the reduced insecticide requirements of Bt corn "will bring about health benefits to farmers and the community at large and was consistent with their vision of developing a livestock and poultry industry that is profitable for the farmer and whose products are safe for human consumption."

Earlier, various industry associations including the Philippine Maize Federation Inc., Philippine Association of Broiler Integrators, National Federation of Hog Farmers, Inc., the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the ARMM Business Council have expressed support for the government's approval of Bt corn domestic propagation in the country.

BOI . . .

From page B3

attached agency, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza), surged 25.52 percent to P11.08 billion in the first quarter this year from P8.54 billion during the same period last year.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II said the investment data were encouraging especially since they were attained at the height of the US-led coalition forces' bombings in Iraq and the outbreak of the SARS virus in Asia.

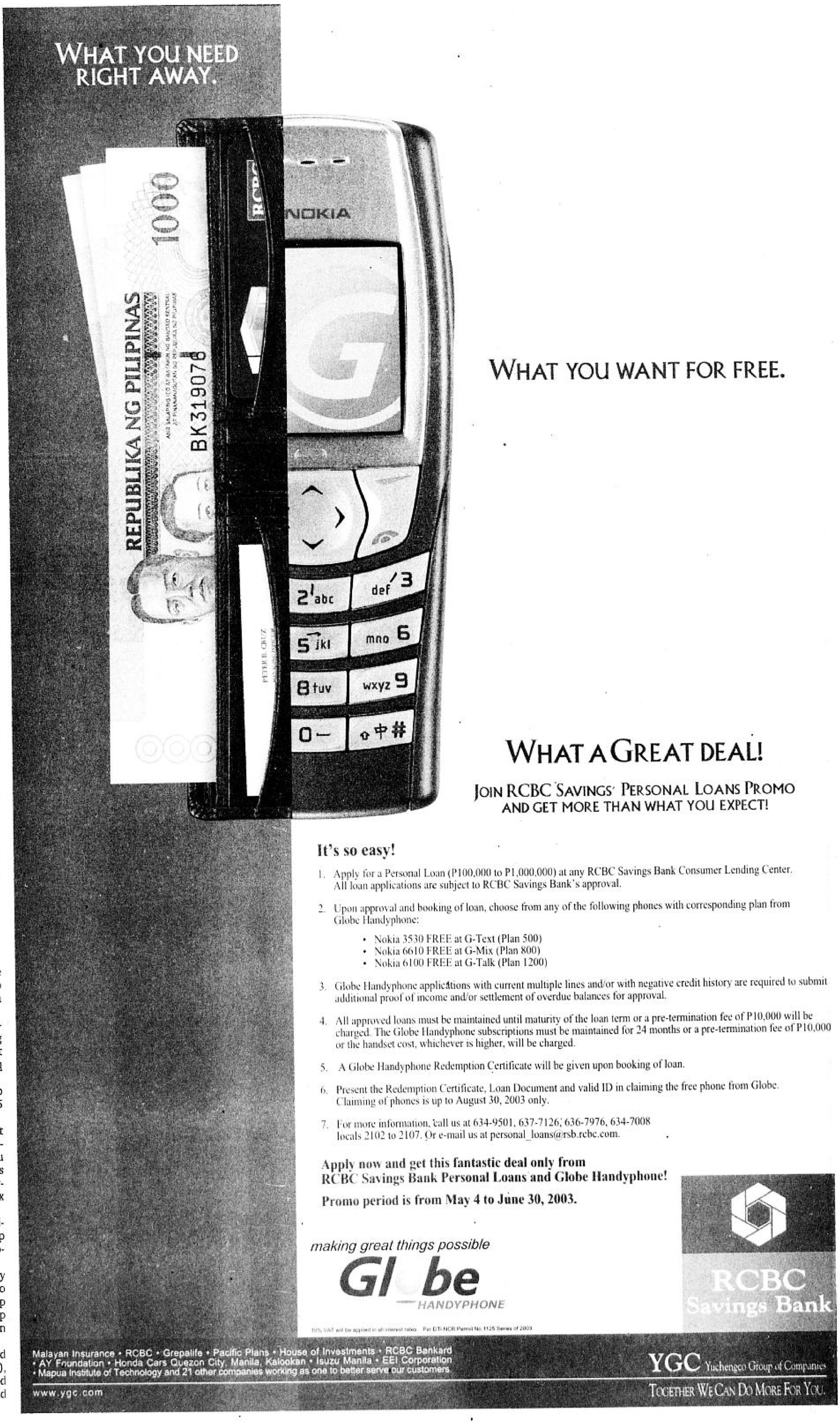
BOI investments increased by 60 percent to P7.53 billion while Peza investments fell 7.15 percent to P3.55 billion.

The biggest projects approved in the first quarter were Victoria Bioenergy Inc. (P4.57 billion), Genpack Corp. (P1.05 billion), Kyushu Matsushita Electric Corp. of the Philippines (P847.49 million), Convergys Philippines Services Corp. (P553.18 million), and E-Performax Contact Center Corp. (P508.62 million).

The top investment sectors during the period were information technology services (up 56 percent to P1.27 billion) and utility projects (up 357 percent to P4.57 billion).

The first quarter investments were mostly funneled into Region 6 (up 41.51 percent to P4.58 billion), National Capital Region (up 21.33 percent to P2.35 billion), Region 4 (up 18.67 percent to P2.06 billion), and Region 11 (up 13.61 percent to P1.5 billion).

The top foreign investors during the period were British (up 2,787 percent to P1.92 billion), Japan (up 40 percent to P1.81 billion), United States (up 2,787 percent to P1.53 billion), and Korea (up 473 percent to P276 million).



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Vast US services sector grows a bit; jobs slump

WASHINGTON—The vast US services sector grew slightly in April even as firms axed jobs, data showed Monday, indicating a patchy postwar economy on the eve of a Federal Reserve meeting.

The services sector, accounting for the bulk of US economic activity, recovered a little even as factories fell deeper into a slump and firms took an axe to jobs, a batch of industry surveys showed.

"We are starting to get some indication that even after the war, businesses are reluctant to boost activity, certainly hiring," BMO Financial Group economist Sal Guatieri said.

The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) said its index of non-manufacturing activity, based on a survey, rose to 50.7 points in April from 47.9 points in March.

Any figure above 50 points indicates an expansion in activity.

In the same month, US firms overall announced 146,399 job cuts in April, up 71 percent from March, according to an industry survey by outplacement firm Challenger, Gray and Christmas.

"The sharp increase in job cuts last month should serve as a warning that it is premature to conclude that a quick end to the war in Iraq will bring a quick turnaround in the economy and job market," said the outplacement firm's chief executive, John Challenger.

Last week, another ISM survey showed manufacturing fell deeper into a slump, with activity slowing to an 18-month low. Government data Friday also showed the unemployment rate surged to 6.0 percent in April from 5.8 percent in March as businesses cut 48,000 jobs in the month.

The figures painted a murky economic picture, making it less likely the Federal Reserve policymakers would cut interest rates when they met Tuesday, analysts said.

The federal funds target rate—which commercial banks charge each other for overnight loans—is already at a four-decade low of 1.25 percent.

"Maybe the underlying pace of demand in the US economy is a little weaker than we thought, and we cannot ascribe all of it to the war," Guatieri said.

"Certainly if that is the case, the Fed will move in the direction of cutting rates, but not at tomorrow's meeting, because they need a cleaner set of statistics," he added.

"But going into the summer, the door is open to a rate cut if the US economy remains subdued."

A breakdown of the ISM services sector survey showed:

- New orders returned to growth, with the index rising to 50.7 points in April from 47.9 in March.
- Employment fell, but at a slower pace, with the index rising to 48.2 points from 47.9.
- Prices rose, but at a slower pace, with the index falling to 56.7 points from 62.0.

"It is too soon to see any major rebound from the effects of the war," Naroff Economic Advisors President Joel Naroff said.

"That there was a decent rebound in the ISM non-manufacturing report, especially in light of the weak manufacturing results, holds out hope that a fair amount of the problems created by the war were only temporary," Naroff said.

"Undoubtedly, the Fed will want to see a lot more data, but the fact that so soon after the war's end the services sector began to rebound should encourage those who expect an upturn to hold their ground."

Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan said last week he still believed the economy was set for a postwar rebound but the outlook was foggy and business nerves were an obstacle.

"I continue to believe the economy is positioned to expand at a noticeably better pace than it has during the past year, though the timing and the extent of that improvement remains uncertain," he said. *AFP*

Euro near four-year peaks; Nikkei up

SINGAPORE—The euro held near four-year highs in Asia on Tuesday while shares climbed on gains in US technology stocks and easing SARS fears, hitting a one-month high in Japan and three-month peaks elsewhere.

Higher European interest rates continued to attract investors disappointed with the dollar's inability to shake off skepticism over a recovery in the US economy. But trade was subdued ahead of a Federal Reserve meeting later in the day that was expected to leave US interest rates unchanged.

"What's really standing out in the market now is the dollar's weakness," said Gen Kawabe, manager of the Treasury department at Chuo Mitsui Trust and Banking. "And you can't really buy the yen aggressively either." The euro hit 133.94 yen, its highest since March 1999.

The Australian dollar also benefited from relatively high interest rates, rising to a three-year peak around $0.6363.

The dollar was steady against the yen around 118.60 yen.

Currency and stock traders in Tokyo were also awaiting proposals to boost the Japanese share market.

Japan's ruling coalition parties are expected to propose an array of such steps later on Tuesday, including the establishment of a stock-buying entity and using the massive reserves of the postal savings system to buy shares.

With the Tokyo stock market also catching up with gains on Wall Street after a Japanese holiday on Monday, the Nikkei average jumped 2.2 percent to 8,083.56.

"The market is eyeing these policy steps, but is not quite sure exactly how they'll come out. I think it will be a mixed bag showing some progress, but with the Nikkei above 8,000 it is probably fair to say the market has entered an uptrend," said Terushi Hirotama, head of trading at Ichiyoshi Securities.

Outside Japan, stocks edged up 0.3 percent to their best levels since January 29, as measured by the regional MSCI Asia Pacific ex-Japan Free Index.

South Korea was one of the biggest gainers, with the benchmark index adding 1.2 percent as worries cooled over North Korea's nuclear program and the economic impact of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Top mobile phone operator SK Telecom jumped 5.4 after reporting better than expected first-quarter earnings. Memory chip maker Hynix Semiconductor Inc. shot up 12 percent on a report its creditors would try to sell it to a Chinese company.

South Korea was also closed for a holiday on Monday, so like Japan had two days of gains in US technology stocks to catch up with.

The Nasdaq Composite ticked up 0.1 percent on Monday, after a two percent rise on Friday, but the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 0.6 percent.

Shares rose 0.4 percent in Taiwan on talk state-linked funds were buying after recent losses triggered by SARS worries.

Hong Kong and Singapore were little changed by midday after recent strong gains on hopes the SARS outbreak had peaked. *Reuters*

TWO workers are lowered down from a building along Orchard road in Singapore. Singapore deputy prime minister Lee Hsien Loong warned workers must be prepared for wage freeze to continue this year as the economy grapples with the SARS outbreak. AFP

Fund seeks laws vs misconduct

SAN FRANCISCO—Calpers, the biggest US pension fund, on Monday called on California to pass laws that would hold companies and their officers more accountable for statements that might deceive shareholders.

In a recommendation posted on its Web site, Calpers backed a California state Senate bill from Democratic Senator Martha Escutia which would impose penalties up to $1 million on companies that knowingly make false statement concerning the value of their stock or conceal information from regulators.

The bill would also impose fines up to $10,000 on corporate officers or directors who knowingly make false statements or fail to disclose material information.

Calpers is an active watchdog in corporate governance and reform. It said it was backing the legislation in response to several recent scandals, including those at Enron Corp. and WorldCom Inc. in which misleading corporate accounting cost investors billions of dollars.

Calpers, too, backed a state senate resolution that would encourage pharmaceutical companies to make HIV and AIDS drug treatments available in less developed countries. *Reuters*

Japan officials study means to boost stocks

TOKYO—Japan's ruling coalition parties are expected to propose an array of steps later on Tuesday to boost the stock market, encouraging investors to bet on a recovery despite the failure of similar attempts over the past year.

Policymakers from the powerful Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and their coalition partners are set to call on the government to establish a stock-buying entity and use the massive reserves of the postal savings system to buy stocks.

They are also likely to call on the Bank of Japan to buy exchange-traded stock funds, or ETFs, as well as bank shares.

It's far from clear whether the government and BOJ will agree to the measures, or whether they will have lasting impact.

But Hideyuki Aizawa, a veteran LDP lawmaker and proponent of a stock boosting package, said over the weekend he had no doubts that the plans would help the Nikkei average recover from current levels of around 8,000, near 20-year lows.

The Nikkei rose 2.86 percent to 8,133.34 in morning trading in anticipation of the measures.

"We've got the combined factors of anticipation of the ruling coalition proposals and the recent US rises driving up the market," said Yutaka Miura, deputy manager of the equity information section at Shinko Securities.

The government is set to discuss the package when its Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy meets on Thursday.

Economics Minister Heizo Takenaka, however, told reporters on Tuesday he was opposed to artificially boosting the market.

"We have no intention of intervening directly in the stock market," he said, adding that the key to improving market performance was long-term structural reform.

The coalition's call for rescuing stock prices, although criticized by many analysts as short-term political opportunism, will add to pressure on Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi who faces a leadership election in September.

Koizumi's personal popularity, which has kept him in the top job, looks increasingly at risk from bad economic news. *Reuters*

Microsoft, HP create next generation PC

SEATTLE—Microsoft Corp. said on Monday it has developed a next-generation personal computer with Hewlett-Packard Co.

The new computer is aimed at helping users who juggle phone calls, faxes, cell phones, e-mail, instant messaging and video conferencing as part of their jobs.

Described as the Next Generation Enterprise Personal Computer and code-named "Athens," the concept PC is translucent hardware that sports a wide flat-panel display with a CD-ROM drive, camera and telephone handset, among other features.

Using software and a Bluetooth wireless technology, the computer can detect what kind of task a user is doing and provide alerts in an appropriate manner.

For example, a user in a video conference would be shown as "busy" on messaging services and incoming phone calls would be directed to voicemail.

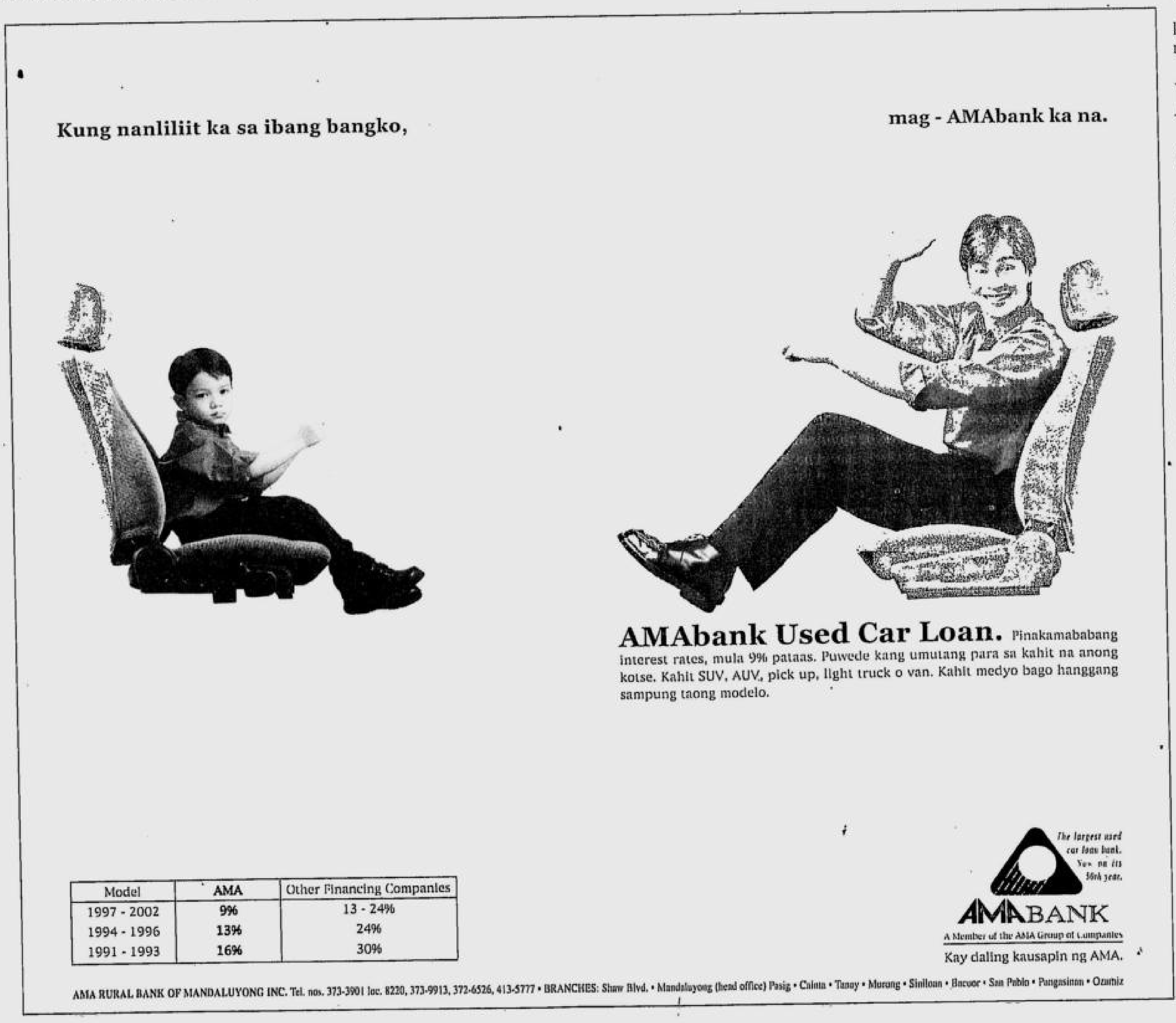
Indicator lights on the PC also flash and change color depending on the priority of a phone call, e-mail or instant message.

Much of such functionality is already available through specialized hardware and software makers, but often at high prices.

Microsoft and HP are betting corporate clients will be willing to buy such PCs to boost their workers' productivity.

Redmond, Washington-based Microsoft has been investing heavily to boost PC sales and branch out into new products as PC growth continues to slow.

The Athens PC, which will be shown by MicrosoftChairman Bill Gates at the Windows Hardware Engineering Conference this week, is at least one to two years from commercialization, a Microsoft official said. *Reuters*



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SARS shows risks of pouring investments in one country

TOKYO—A senior member of Apec's business arm warned Tuesday that the outbreak of SARS in China should be regarded as a lesson to businessmen not to concentrate their investments in any one country.

"Concentration in one country or one area ... is always something to be considered carefully," said Tasuku Takagaki, former president of the Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi and a senior member of the Apec (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Business Advisory Council (Abac).

"SARS has perhaps given some warning on that point," Takagaki told a joint news conference with other Japanese representatives of Abac ahead of a four-day meeting of the business advisory council in Tokyo from May 13.

In the wake of the SARS outbreak, concern has been raised over the outlook for the Chinese economy, which is home to the production bases of major manufacturing companies from Japan and other countries.

SARS is expected to be high on the agenda for the Abac meeting, which will draw business leaders from the 21 Apec member economies—Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.

"We have not had any concrete plan at the moment but we have a plan to talk about the effect of SARS at the Abac meeting," said Nobuhiko Kawamoto, former president of Honda Motor and another senior member of Abac.

Kawamoto suggested the impact of SARS on Japanese investment in China may be limited, however, as many Japanese firms have taken a cautious approach when investing in the country.

"Major Japanese businessmen investing in China have been making step-by-step investments until now," Kawamoto said. "So, in that sense, regardless of SARS, the attitude will not change."

Kawamoto also said it is "too early to say" anything about the possibility that Chinese authorities could restrict business activities as they tackle the SARS outbreak.

The Abac, the private sector arm of Apec, submits an annual report to Apec leaders on potential measures to improve business and investment in the region.

Apec trade ministers will meet June 2-3 in the northeastern Thai province of Khon Kaen and assess information on the impact of SARS.

AFP

Ted Turner cuts AOL Time stake

NEW YORK—Billionaire Ted Turner has sold 60 million shares of AOL Time Warner Inc., raising $784 million and cutting his stake in the media giant he helped to create by more than half.

The sale Monday is the latest by Turner to divest his holdings in the company. His 45 million remaining shares leave him with about 1 percent of the company.

Turner sold his shares for $13.07 each, according to a person familiar with the sale price.

Turner sold 50 million shares outright, and transferred another 10 million to a charitable trust, which then sold those shares, the company said.

The Wall Street Journal reported that Goldman Sachs Group Inc. bought the shares.

Turner also has ended his stock sale program.

In January, Turner announced that he would leave the company as vice chair this month after its annual shareholders meeting on May 16.

In a statement announcing the stock sale, AOL Time Warner said Turner had decided to remain on its board.

Turner, who founded Atlanta-based Cable News Network and Turner Broadcasting, remains the company's largest shareholder.

AP

ILO urges US lead on jobs plan for poor

WASHINGTON—The head of the International Labor Organization on Monday urged the United States to take the lead in developing new international policies aimed at helping poor people around the world get a "decent" job.

ILO Director General Juan Somavia also called for the creation of a new "globalization policy forum," which would bring together experts from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the ILO.

"Its charge would be to agree on a coherent set of policy proposals to stimulate sustainable growth," Somavia said in a speech.

The question of how to harness the forces of globalization and trade liberalization to boost working conditions and job opportunities for the world's poorest people requires an integrated approach among the world's major multilateral institutions, he said.

The United States can play a leadership role by devoting more resources to the problem and by connecting proposed solutions to fundamental American values such as "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," he said.

"I believe that throughout the world the pursuit of happiness today means an opportunity for decent work and family," the former Chilean ambassador to the UN said.

Creating more and better-paying jobs for the world's poor also would boost US security interests because employed people "are less likely to be tempted by political forces," Somavia said.

Reuters

Despite SARS, Thai growth on track

BANGKOK—Thailand said on Tuesday its consumption-driven economic growth remained on track, despite the global outbreak of the deadly flu-like SARS virus hitting tourism and exports.

Bank of Thailand Governor Pridiyathorn Devakula told a seminar that robust domestic consumption and improved farm incomes would likely offset revenue losses in other areas, due to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

"The external environment may not be conducive to growth, but domestically the expansion is still on track," he said.

Pridiyathorn estimated the economy grew 5.8 percent in the year to the first quarter of 2003, against 3.9 percent year-on-year growth in the same period in 2002 and 6.1 percent growth in the last quarter of 2002.

He also expected exports to rise six to seven percent this year despite some impact from SARS, particularly on demand for Thai products from other Asian countries. Exports grew 5.8 percent in 2002.

Domestic consumption increased to about 6.1 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2003, against an average first-quarter growth of three to four percent in recent years, he said.

Despite the central bank's earlier projection that SARS would erode Thai gross domestic product growth by 0.7 of a percentage point this year, the bank stuck to its earlier forecast of 3.5-4.5 percent growth for 2003 made in January.

The governor said the projection was unchanged because of faster-than-expected overall growth in the last quarter of 2002 and the first quarter of this year.

The central bank said last week it expected SARS to reduce total foreign tourist arrivals this year to 9.73 million, from 10.8 million in 2002.

Tourism revenue accounted for about six percent of Thai GDP in 2002.

Reuters

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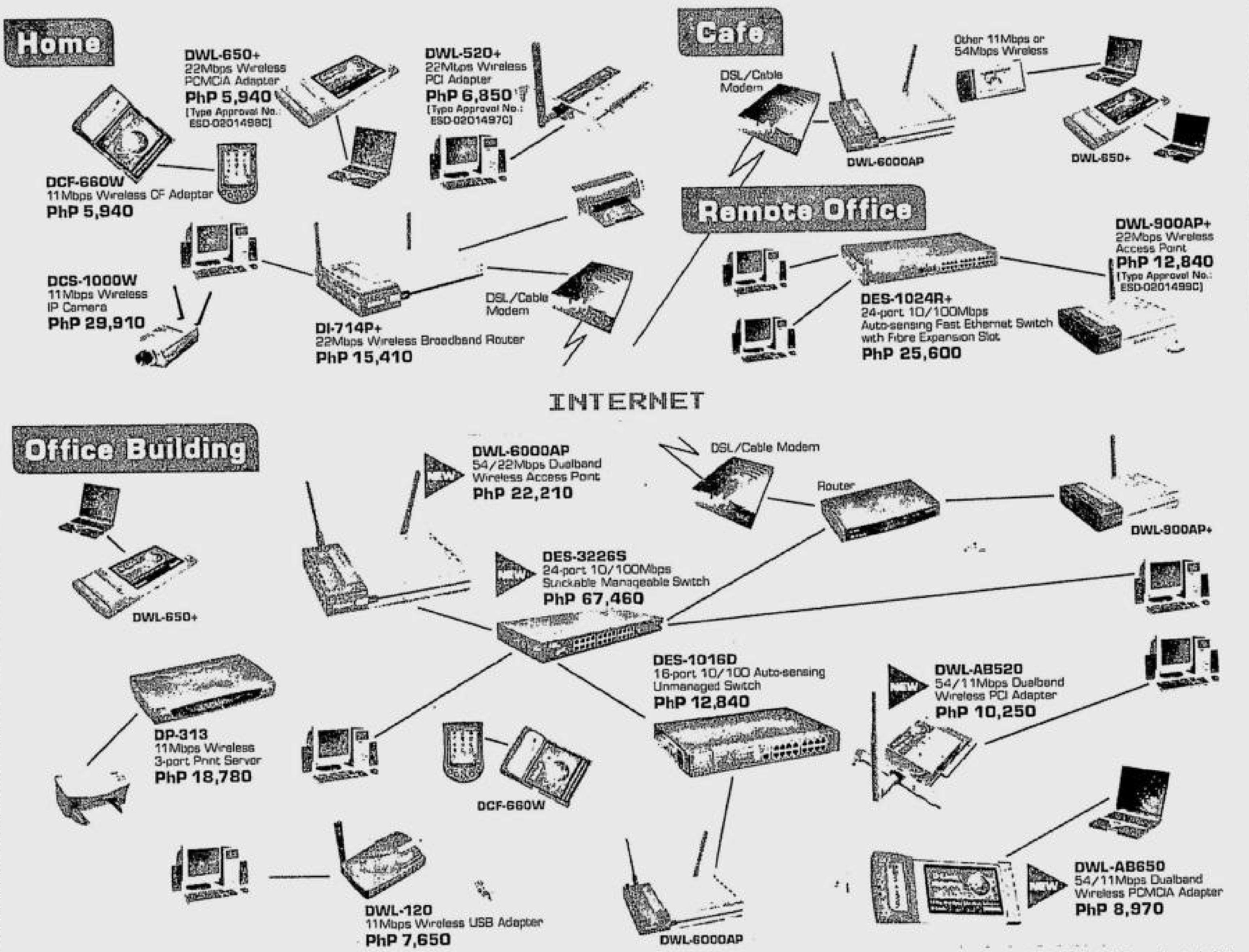
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'Should employees with bad records be blacklisted?'

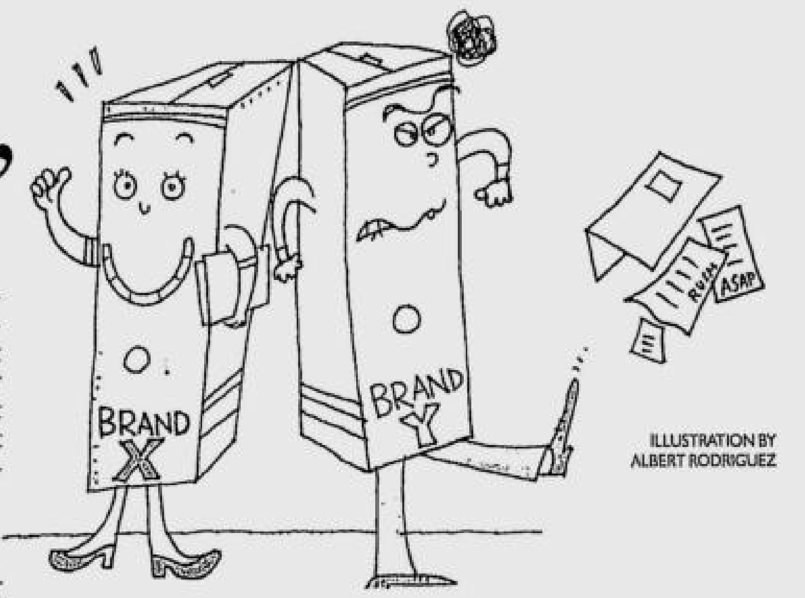

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice
FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I USED to be connected with a pharmaceutical company, as its financial controller. I am now connected with an IT consulting firm. I read your article about an employee who went AWOL and I found it very appropriate to a current issue in the office.

Do we have here in the Philippines an e-group among HR executives where we can post the names of employees with bad records? Employees with bad records would refer to those who go AWOL, leave the company without proper turnover after filing the resignation letter, do not pay a pre-agreed training fee in case the staying period stated in the Employment Agreement is not completed, are involved in theft-either money or information, habitual absentee/tardy, are always delayed in submitting deliverables, or have questionable integrity.

In case such an e-group exists, please let me know. Of course, it is a basic assumption that the HR executive make responsible reports by making full disclosure-i.e., stating the name of the company, the full name of the employee, the position he/she held in the said company, and the grounds on which the said employee is being blacklisted. Of course, it does not necessarily follow that once a name is posted in this e-group, the said employee can no longer be employed again.

But at least, this listing will definitely help the HR executives in processing the application of the said "blacklisted" employee. Properly warned, the HR executive just has to verify for himself/herself the "classified information" s/he got from the e-group. And s/he will no longer be deceived by those employees who could be very good in writing their resumes, or very good during interviews, but would turn out as problem employees sooner or later once hired. This exercise will also reduce the turnover in companies, as company B need not undergo the same experience company A had with employee X.

Yes, experience is the best teacher but we do not have the luxury of time and we might as well learn from other people's experiences.

Thank you for letting me know your thoughts on this matter. If no such e-group or avenue exists, is it possible for you to start one? More power to you, your company, and your enlightening articles!

Undesirable List Advocate

Let me apologize for not being able to respond to your letter at once. Thanks for re-sending your earlier letter. Yes, I remember you and I congratulate you for moving on successfully in terms of career. Your suggestion to blacklist undesirables in organizations in an e-group of personnel and human resource managers is very creative and innovative. It reminds me of the credit bureau that banks use to list and check out people with poor credit records. But I would not pickup the suggestion to start one, not through e-mail as suggested.

Second chance

One, my basic belief is that every person deserves a second chance to convert and better himself or herself. To blacklist an offender is to deprive him or her of the means to a job. It will effectively mean consigning one to a life of unemployment. What happens then to his/her family? My view is such action may violate one's basic rights.

Two, today human resource managers have ways to check out people through reference checks or by employing private investigators. They are also trained in interviewing techniques that enable them to probe deeply into people's competencies and attitudes. In my mind, these tools are adequate to determine people who are qualified.

Three, we know that undesirable employee behaviors or performance may be caused by other factors that exist in the organizational environment. Sometimes, it may be the lack or absence of effective performance management systems or lack of clarity of rules and norms, or the presence of a weak culture.

Subject to abuse

Four, what could prevent an unethical manager from having blacklisted another person simply to avenge a wrong done or due to intrigues and political backbiting that are present especially in big corporations?

Fifth, my biggest fear, especially with an e-group is that information gets into the hands of individuals who may use the information for other immoral purposes.

Meantime, let us think through other means to dissuade people from acting unethically through proper communication and training, value formation and strengthening organizational effectiveness. But I welcome feedback and views from our readers on this subject. Warm greetings.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and president of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send comments, feedback or requests for advice through e-mail advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to 892-2902.)*

Use emotions to your advantage

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

NOT in the mood for work? Up all night attending to the baby and you're not quite ready for that 8:30 a.m. meeting? Do you put on the stiff upper lip again or do you risk letting the ogre in you out?

Many people believe that bringing your work to the office is as unprofessional (and potentially disastrous) as showing up in a terrycloth robe and curlers, write Cora Llamas and Dedet Reyes Panabi in the May issue of Metro Working Mom. Coming to work in a snit lends itself too easily to gender stereotyping: when we let out that little growl, it's read as a tantrum, a "woman's mood."

The truth is our emotions can be used to our advantage. If we learn to make our emotions work for us, it can help improve our performance at work. Jingle Aguirre, an HR director with a master's degree in Industrial Psychology, gives the following tips:

- Identify the source of the emotion. When you're feeling particularly high at the end of the day, stop and ask yourself what went right. When you're feeling angry, pinpoint what triggered your anger. Finding out what happened will help you seek out the positive events that bring out the best in you and put the negative emotions in proper perspective.
- Find out how you can use the emotion to fuel an appropriate action. Even negative emotions can bring about positive results, if channeled the right way. If you're frustrated that things didn't turn out the way you planned them to, step back and review your options. Then channel your energies toward a solution that could work.
- Do not hurt other people. It is so tempting to lash out, hurt back and destroy whoever it is that is inflicting pain on us. But insults, threats, shouting matches, and backbiting damage relationships and self-esteem-and cause miscommunication and low morale at the very moment when you need the team to pull together and solve the crisis. If you cannot keep your anger in, take a walk, let off steam, collect your wits about you, and then come back when you are calmer.

When you are ready to talk, state your disappointment in a way that will put you and the person on the same side, instead of at opposing ends. Instead of saying, "I am so disappointed that you didn't meet your deadline," say, "I am worried that we will not meet our deadline, what can we do about it..."

(An Mercado-Alcantara is editor-in-chief of Metro Working Mom published by ABS-CBN Publishing. Zsa Zsa Padilla and Dolphy are on this month's cover.)

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2 TILL THERE WAS YOU	2 25TH HOUR	2 X-MEN 2 12:05, 2:55, 5:45, 8:35	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 X-MEN 2 30, 4:26, 7:20, 10:15	2 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
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4 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE	4 PINOCCHIO		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND 12:05 2:20 4:35 6:50 9:05 11:20	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
	5 JOHNNY ENGLISH		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 X-MEN 2 2:45 5:40 8:35 11:30	5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
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3

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4

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3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
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7 (DTS) BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
8
9

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1 X-MEN-2
2 XEREX

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5 XEREX

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3 X-MEN-2

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2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 BAYARAN

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2 XEREX
3 (DTS) TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 X-MEN-2

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3 RESERVE

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2 X-MEN-2
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 JOHNNY ENGLISH

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1 EQUILIBRIUM
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 X-MEN-2
4 XEREX

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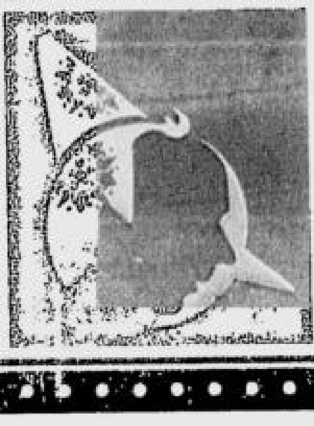

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7 BAYARAN
8 JOHNNY ENGLISH

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1 TILL THERE WAS YOU
2 JOHNNY ENGLISH
3 X-MEN 2
4 XEREX
5 X-MEN 2
6 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
7 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
8 SOULKEEPER
9 BAYARAN
10 TILL THERE WAS YOU

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1 ANGER MANAGEMENT
2 JOHNNY ENGLISH
3 EQUILIBRIUM
4 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
5 A MAN APART
6 BAYARAN
7 X-MEN 2
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10 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
11 XEREX
12 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

SM CITY MANILA

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1 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
2 JOHNNY ENGLISH
3 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
4 X-MEN 2
5 SOULKEEPER
6 X-MEN 2
7 BAYARAN
8 PINOCCHIO
9 TILL THERE WAS YOU
10 A MAN APART
11 XEREX
12 TILL THERE WAS YOU

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1 X-MEN 2
2 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
3 X-MEN 2
4 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
5 PINOCCHIO
6 ANGER MANAGEMENT
7 BAYARAN
8 EQUILIBRIUM
9 TILL THERE WAS YOU
10 JOHNNY ENGLISH
11 SOULKEEPER
12 XEREX

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9295452

1 NPINOCCHIO
2 X-MEN 2
3 XEREX
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 BAYARAN
6 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
7 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
8 X-MEN 2

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1 PINOCCHIO
2 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
3 X-MEN 2
4 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
6 SOULKEEPER
7 TILL THERE WAS YOU
8 X-MEN 2
9 XEREX
10 BAYARAN

SM CITY CEBU

2313876

1 X-MEN 2
2 SOLARIS
3 ANGER MANAGEMENT
4 JAILBIRDS
5 XEREX
6 BAYARAN
7 TILL THERE WAS YOU
8 X-MEN 2

SM CITY ILOILO

3209422

1 JAILBIRDS
2 CLOSED
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 KANGAROO JACK
5 X-MEN 2
6 ANGER MANAGEMENT
7 CLOSED
8 BAYARAN

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2 A MAN APART
3 RING 2
4 BAYARAN
5 PHONE BOOTH
6 TILL THERE WAS YOU

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT

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2 X-MEN 2
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND

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1 X-MEN 2
2 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 BAYARAN

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2 JAILBIRDS
3 WISHMASTER 4
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 ANGER MANAGEMENT
6 KANGAROO JACK

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2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 BAYARAN
4 X-MEN 2

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1 SOLARIS
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 ANGER MANAGEMENT
4 X-MEN 2

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7 CONFESSIONS DANGEROUD MIND

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8 BAYARAN

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1 X- MEN 2
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3 XEREX
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8 BAYARAN

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3 BAYARAN
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6 A MAN APART

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3 BAYARAN
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5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
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2 A MAN APART
3 BAYARAN
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 XEREX

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3 XEREX
4 ANGER MANAGEMENT
5 KANGAROO JACK
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3 KANGAROO JACK
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 BAYARAN
6 JAIL BIRDS

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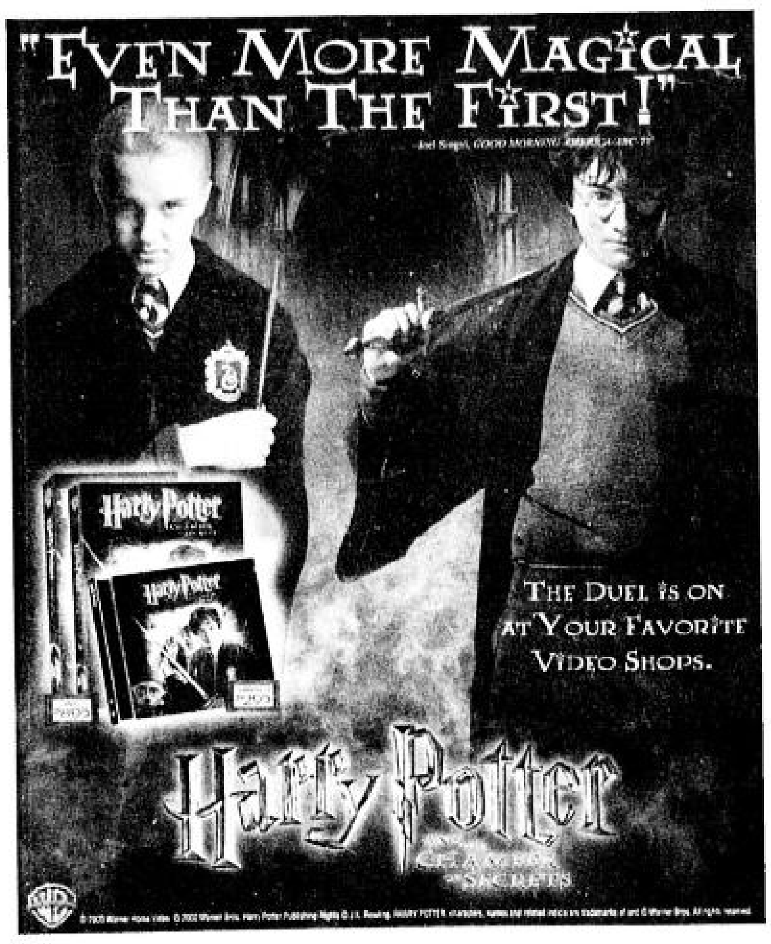
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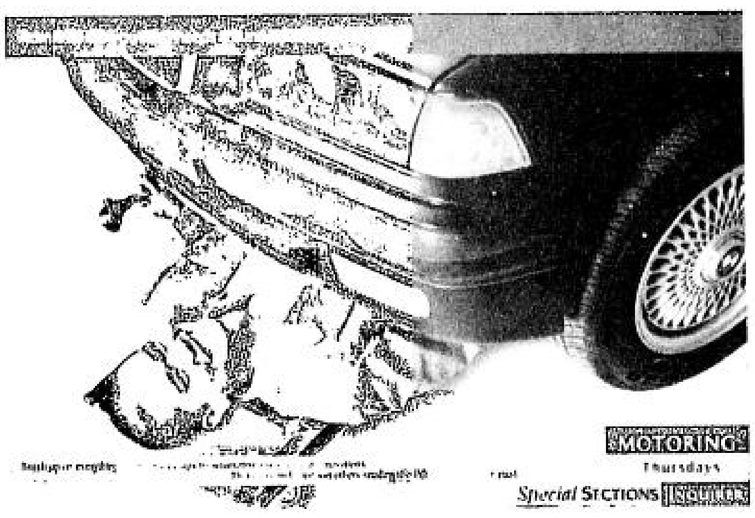
PINOCCHIO GP 12:20,2:45,5:10, 7:35,10:00	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE P13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND P13 12:50,3:05,5:20,7:35,9:50
X-MEN 2 P13 1:05,3:55, 6:45,9:35	X-MEN 2 P13 12:10,3:00, 5:50,8:40	X-MEN 2 P13 2:00,4:50, 7:40,10:30

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	PUNLA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	PUNLA
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	TILL THERE WAS YOU
B	BAYARAN
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-2	BAYARAN
CINEMA-3	XEREX
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	JOHNNY ENGLISH
CINEMA-6	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-7	A MAN APART
CINEMA-8	PUNLA
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	BRINGING THE HOUSE DOWN
CINEMA-12	PINOCCHIO
CINEMA-14	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-15	CONFESSION OF DANGEROUS MIND
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LANES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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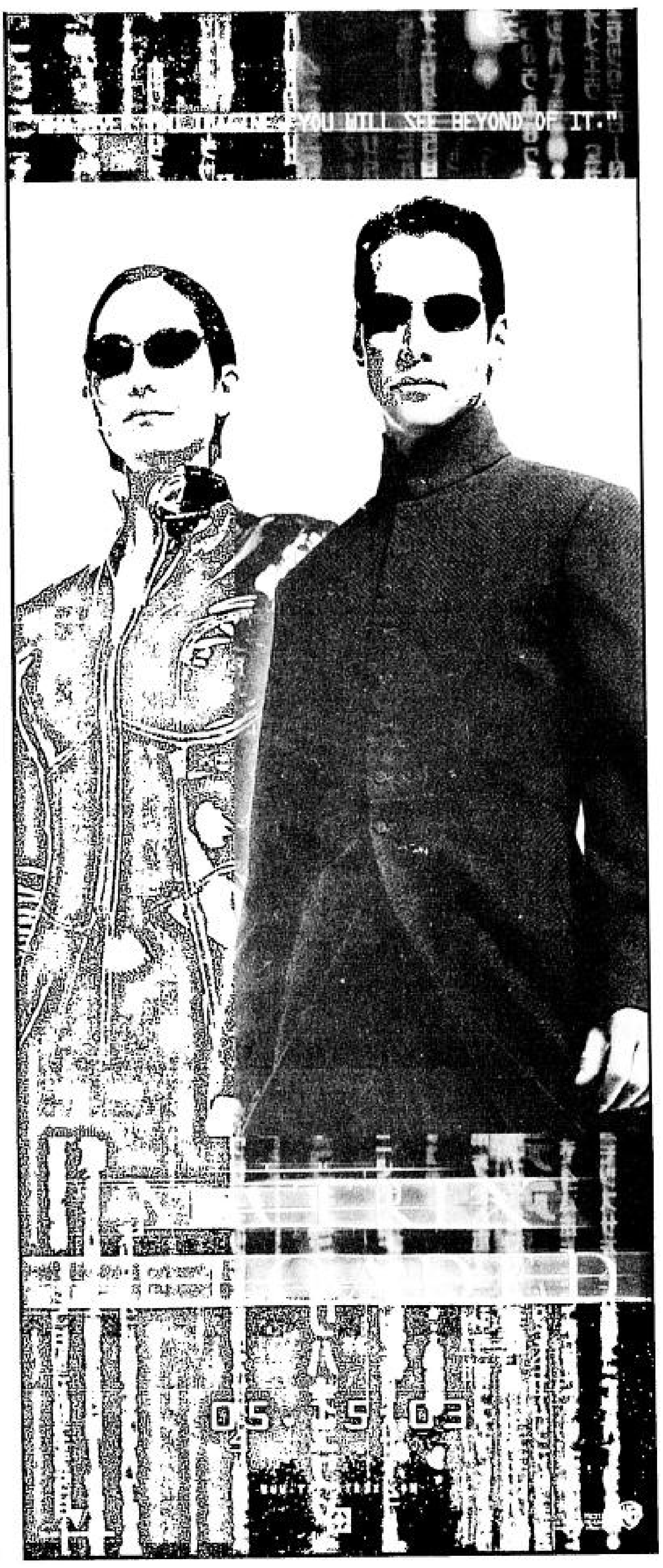
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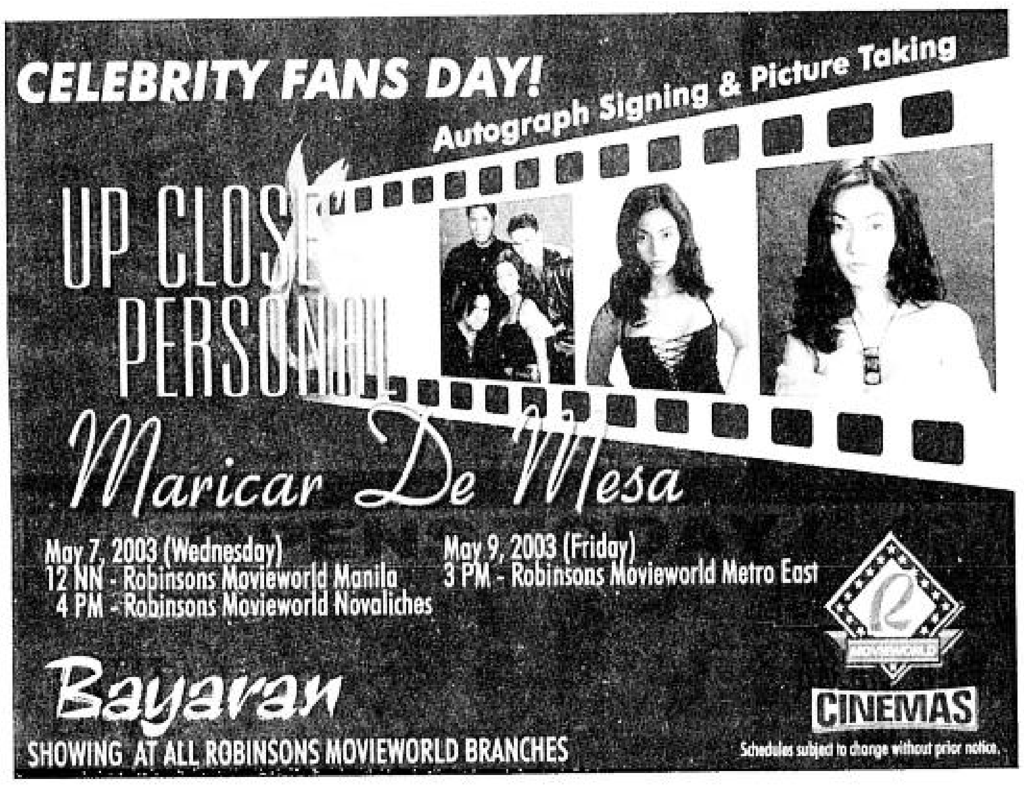
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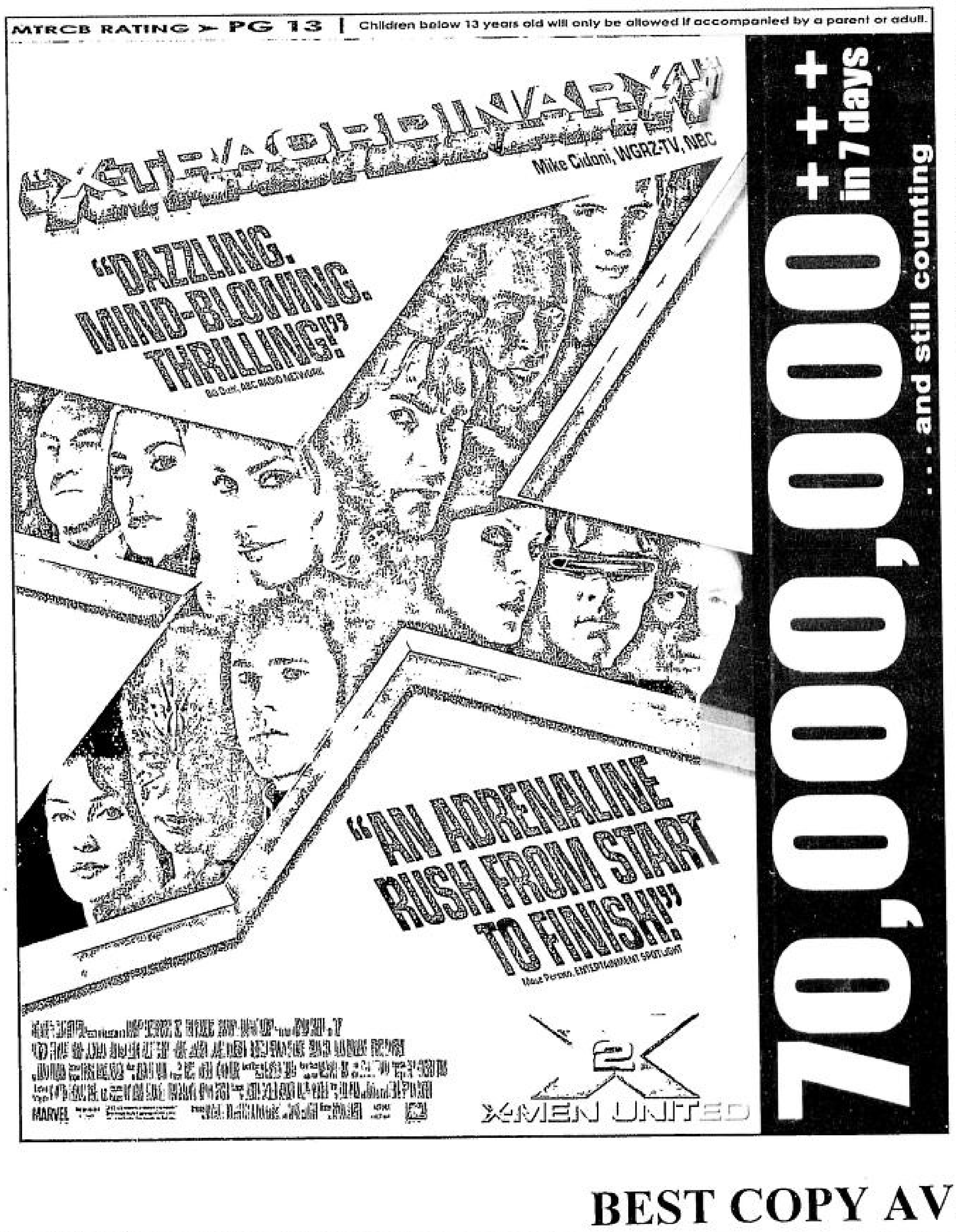
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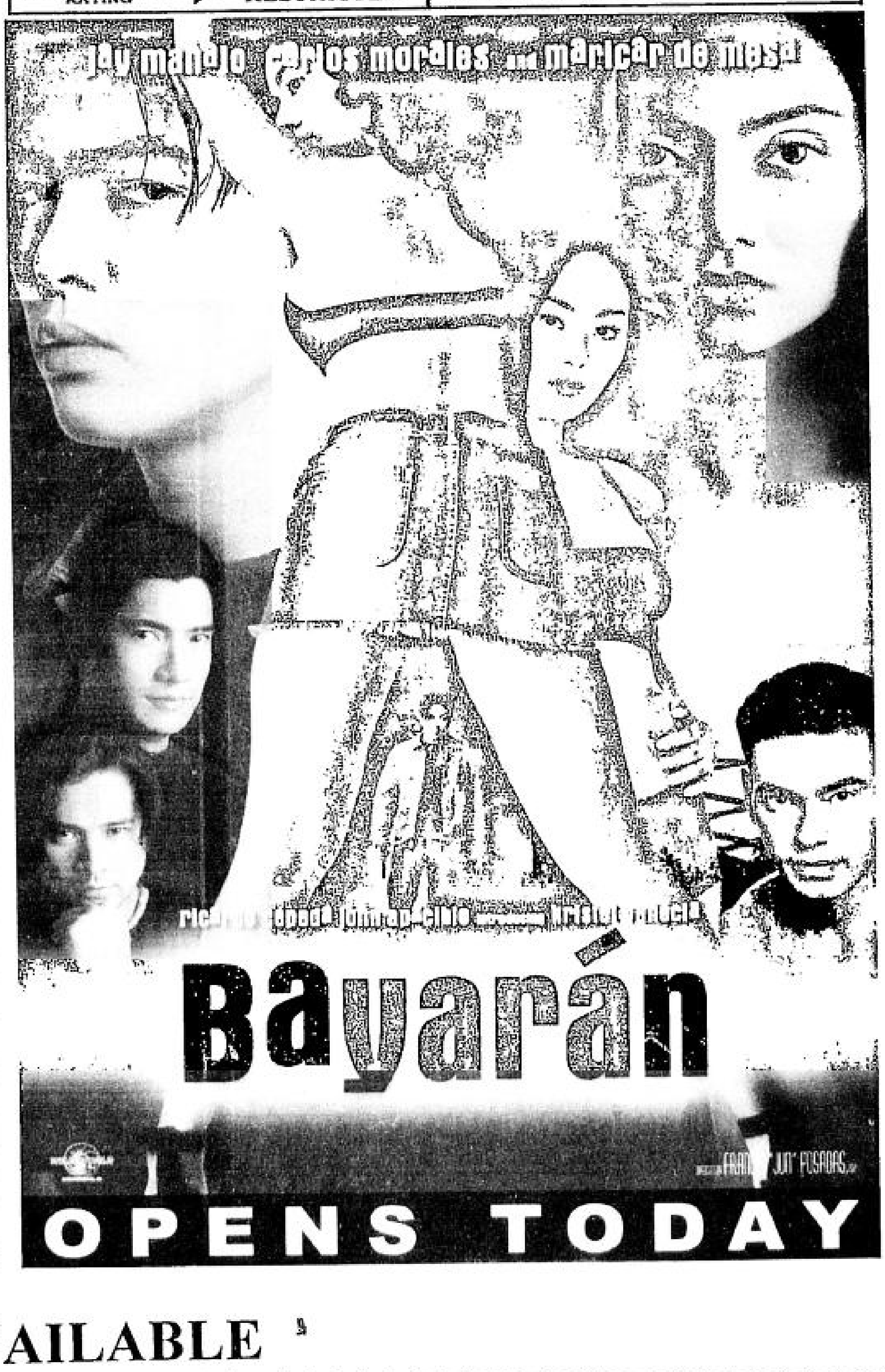
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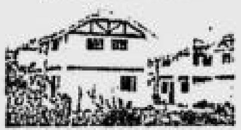

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Technical Education & Skills Development Authority

TO OUR VALUED CLIENTS AND TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- Greeting from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).
- Recent events involving the deployment of overseas performing artists have made us undertake a thorough inventory of Artist Record Books (ARBs) issued by TESDA in recent months.
- The inventory has allowed us to identify and take note of ARBs, which will require validation and vertification. It is in this context and spirit that we are inviting all talents (and their managers or promoters or agencies) holding ARBs included in the list to submit the same to TESDA for proper verification and validation within 2 weeks beyond which unsubmitted ARBs shall be declared null and void.

A. All ARBs form serial number 54000 to 54000
B. All ARBs with serial numbers in the list below;

THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND AWAITING FOR YOUR FAVORABLE RESPONSE.

ALCESTIS M. GUIANG
DIRECTOR GENERAL
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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23565	30561	31691	32343
23644	30562	31692	32344
23668	30563	31693	32345
23902	30564	31694	32346
24103	30565	31695	32347
24661	30566	31696	32348
24663	30567	31697	32349
24702	30568	31698	32350
25072	30569	31699	32351
25250	30570	31700	32352
25338	30571	31822	32353
27589	30572	31825	32354
27757	30573	31906	32355
27819	30574	31907	32356
27887	30575	32199	32357
28500	30963	32200	32358
28718	31338	32201	32359
28779	31423	32202	32360
28780	31450	32203	32361
28781	31470	32215	32362
28782	31461	32319	32363
28783	31627	32320	32364
28784	31628	32321	32365
28785	31635	32322	32366
28786	31671	32323	32367
28787	31672	32324	32368
28789	31673	32325	32369
28790	31674	32326	32370
28791	31675	32327	32371
29250	31676	32328	32372
29768	31677	32329	32373
30342	31678	32330	32374
30490	31679	32331	32375
30493	31680	32332	32376
30494	31681	32333	32377
30496	31682	32334	32378
30505	31683	32335	32379
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30559	31689	32341	32385
32386	32780	32824	44908
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32389	32783	32827	44911
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32396	32790	32834	44918
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32760	32804	32848	44932
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32763	32807	34769	44935
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32766	32810	35086	44938
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32771	32815	44857	44943
32772	32816	44871	44944
32773	32817	44901	44945
32774	32818	44902	44946
32775	32819	44903	44947
32776	32820	44904	44948
32777	32821	44905	44949
32778	32822	44906	44950
32779	32823	44907	44951
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44959	45003	45047	45091
44960	45004	45048	45092
44961	45005	45049	45093
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48224	52227	53337	53381
48293	52228	53338	53382
48345	52229	53339	53383
48346	52230	53340	53384
48781	52231	53341	53385
48782	52232	53342	53386
48783	53202	53343	53387
48784	53204	53344	53388
48785	53301	53345	53389
48786	53302	53346	53390
48787	53303	53347	53391
48788	53304	53348	53392
48789	53305	53349	53393
48790	53306	53350	53394
48791	53307	53351	53395
48792	53308	53352	53396
48793	53309	53353	53397
48794	53310	53354	53398
48795	53311	53355	53399
48796	53312	53356	53400
48797	53313	53357	53422
48798	53314	53358	53460
48799	53315	53359	53480
48800	53316	53360	53567
49561	53317	53361	53650
50702	53318	53362	53669
50750	53319	53363	53673
50751	53320	53364	53697
50752	53321	53365	53698
51035	53322	53366	53746
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51769	53324	53368	53817
51770	53325	53369	53818
51771	53326	53370	53863
51772	53327	53371	53865
51773	53328	53372	54171
51774	53329	53373	54216
51775	53330	53374	54220
51862	53331	53375	54221
51863	53332	53376	54222
51865	53333	53377	54223
51867	53334	53378	54224
52187	53335	53379	54225
54226	54270	54476	54521
54227	54271	54477	54522
54228	54272	54478	54523
54229	54273	54479	54524
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54231	54275	54481	54526
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54233	54277	54483	54528
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54235	54279	54485	54530
54236	54280	54486	54531
54237	54281	54488	54532
54238	54282	54489	54533
54239	54283	54490	54534
54240	54284	54491	54535
54241	54285	54492	54536
54242	54286	54493	54537
54243	54287	54494	54538
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54246	54290	54497	54541
54247	54291	54498	54542
54248	54292	54499	54543
54249	54293	54500	54544
54250	54294	54501	54545
54251	54295	54502	54546
54252	54296	54503	54547
54253	54297	54504	54548
54254	54298	54505	54549
54255	54299	54506	54550
54256	54300	54507	54551
54257	54463	54508	54552
54258	54464	54509	54554
54259	54465	54510	54555
54260	54466	54511	54556
54261	54467	54512	54557
54262	54468	54513	54558
54263	54469	54514	54559
54264	54470	54515	54560
54265	54471	54516	54562
54266	54472	54517	54563
54267	54473	54518	54564
54268	54474	54519	54566
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54575	54624	54684	
54576	54625	54686	
54577	54626	54688	
54581	54627	54691	
54582	54628	54692	
54583	54629	54693	
54584	54630	54694	
54586	54631	54821	
54588	54632	54826	
54589	54633	50364	
54590	54634	60049	
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54610	54661		
54611	54663		
54612	54664		
54613	54665		
54614	54670		
54615	54671		
54616	54672		

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

FARM/FISHPEN/ RAWLANDS

★SUBIC back of CT Hall 46has.@200/m² 0919221766

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

RESORT

Pansol Hot Spring priv 7870543

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

BAGUIO

2BR BAGUIO FF T9316443

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

CONDO/TWNHSE

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NEW STUDIO / Coml / 2BR 6.5Tup 1672 Dian St. Mkti 843-9418 • 0918 9390355

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

Salcedo 1Brm Must See New Rmdld T547-3472/71

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

CONDO/TWNHSE

VARIED AREAS

5 New Condo QC 8156172 9210808

APARTMENT

Bnew UD 2TB grg 8969417

APARTMENT

MAKATI

1631 Benito Nr PRC 758-8733

Nr. Rockwell 2BR 742-1029

MANILA

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Bnew Van 8254058 8261045

BRDNEW URVAN 8252988

HI ACE/URVAN 4HIRE 7765314

HI-ACE/L3 4561218/9296250

L300 T7411356

STAREX'03 MB100 9483535

P800/L3 9136710/4333682

PREGIO/HI-Ace 9320844

REVO w/driver 9272821

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Tel. No. 873-1511
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Van 0917-6626993 • 6421840

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1HR FastCarLoan 7125202

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/o Taking Car 6567685

2% w/oTaking Car 8966633/30

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 3732081-82

2% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

2% w/oTaking Car 3646928

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

APPLIANCES

SOLAR WATER HEATER 4141603 • 09205372910 Anthony

BILLIARDS

??T New Compll SR Impld 7767507

CONSTRUNCTION MATERIAL

Floor Sand Mach Imported Cheap 9221655 • 4353723

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DOG TRAINER 4528681

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Gregorio D. Diaz has been extrajudicially settled with assignment of rights among his heirs before Notary Public, Atty. Jaime S. De Guzman as per Doc. No. 480; Page No. 96; Book No. 207; Series of 2003.

(PDI - May 7, 14 & 21, 2003)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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MktgStf 0919-2535623 Glenda

Ofc Staff 09165414753 JM

OFF STAF 09196499747

SUPERVISOR 0920-2684255 MS. GIFT

TRAINING OFFICER 0919-2254942

PUBLIC NOTICES.

ANNOUNCEMENT

CAREGIVER TRNG 5271590

AUCTION SALE

MARA PAWNSHOP BR. of 2230 M. Roxas St. Sta. Ana Manila. Auction Sale on May 12, 2003, Monday at 2:30 in the afternoon, Respectively, Dec. 13-Jan. 12, 2003.
SONS OF J. LANUZA, Auctioneer.

MARA PAWNSHOP
I, II, III, IV and Comembo Br.
of Makati City.
AUCTION SALE on May 12, 2003, Mon. at 10:30, 11:30, 1:30, 12:30 and 8:30 in the morning and on the afternoon, respectively Dec. 13-Jan. 12, 2003.
Sons of J. Lanuza,
Auctioneer

MI MARA PAWNSHOP of 251 Quirino Ave., Baclaran Paranaque, M.M. Auction Sale on May 12, 2003, Mon. at 4:00 in the afternoon. Respectively, Dec. 13-Jan. 12, 2003. Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer.

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that estate of the late Spouses Eduardo Taylor & Soledad Manzano Taylor consisting of property at Manila Memorial Park, P'que MM was extrajudicially settled by their heirs per Doc.16658 Page54 Book 45 Series2003 before Atty. Danilo Banares of Mktl City.
PDI-April 23,30 & May 7,2003

NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the late BENJAMIN LUNA BARGAS who died on October 27, 2002 in Makati City has been the subject of an extrajudicial settlement on April 21, 2003, by and among his heirs wherein they agreed to divide the estae accordingly, as evidenced in the document executed and acknowledged before Notary Public Gina C. Garcia of Makati City, and entered in her Notarial Registry as Doc. No. 238, Page No. 48, Book II, Series of 2003.
(PDI-Apr. 23, 30 & May 7, 2003)

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TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: March 28, 2003
LOAN NO.: MIYAZAWA
CONTRACT NO.: SP02.CMIP.Vw-0358

1. The *National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO)* has received a loan from the *Miyazawa Funds for Cebu-Mactan Interconnection Project* and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract *Design, Furnishing, Installing, Testing and Commissioning (Turn-key Basis) GIS Substation including Protection & Communication Systems and Underground Power & fiber Optic Cables.*
2. The *National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO)* invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the:

   Schedule I - Design, Furnishing, Installing, Testing and Commissioning (Turn-key Basis) 138/69 kV GIS & Conventional Outdoor Substation Equipment including Protection & Communication Systems for Mandaue S/S, Mactan S/S & Banilad S/S Expansion

   Schedule II - Design, Furnishing, Installing, Testing and Commissioning (Turn-key Basis) 138 kV Underground XLPE Power Cables & Fiber Optic Cables
3. Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect and acquire the bidding documents at the *Office of the Manager, Bids and Contracts Management Department, 2nd Floor, Building 2, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City (Zip Code 1104), Philippines, Tel./Fax Number: 921-2308.*
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders starting March 28, 2003 upon submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *fifty-five thousand pesos (Php 55,000.00).*
5. A two-envelope bidding procedure will be adopted. Bidders are to submit simultaneously two (2)-sealed envelopes, one (1) containing the technical proposal and one (1) containing the price proposal. Initially only the technical proposals are opened. Technical proposals which are submitted by non-qualified bidders or which are not substantially responsive are rejected. The substantially responsive technical proposals that have been submitted by qualified bidders are discussed with the bidders and the bidders are requested for full compliance. The bidders may or may not submit a supplementary price proposal, which contain the changes in price resulting from the discussed changes in the technical proposals. The original price proposal and the supplementary price proposal are opened simultaneously in public
6. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of:

   Schedule I - Three Hundred Seventy Four Thousand Three Hundred Twenty US dollars (US$374,320)

   Schedule II - Two Hundred Sixty Thousand and Forty US dollars (US$260,040)

   The bid security must be included with the technical proposal.

   The deadline for the submission of bids will be on July 15, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. at the aforementioned address. Late submissions will be rejected.
7. The technical proposals together with the bid security will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
8. The price proposals will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the time and date and at the address to be advised by the Employer after approval of the evaluation of the technical proposals.
9. The total contract duration for each schedule is 540 calendar days.
10. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any or all Bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
11. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN
Chairman
Bids Award Committee

(PDI - May 3, 7 & 17, 2003)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the late **ELIZABETH C. COBB** has been extra-judicially settled on May 5, 2003, Under Doc. No. 48; Page No. 11; Book No. XV; Series of 2003, before Notary Public FELIPE L. ZULUETA of Paranaque.
(PDi-May 7, 14 & 21, 2003)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Alfredo P. Casino was extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. No. 233, Page No. 48, Book No. XXXVIII, Series of 2003 of Notary Public Alfonso Y. Lacap of Pasig City
(PDI-April 23, 30, May 7, 2003)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

MBTC STOCK CERT. 127130 1,185 SHS.n/o DAN T.DOMINGO

Prepaid CN & Official Receipt ABOITIZ ONE, INC. w/series no H0649467C-H0649500C & N641968 Respectively Transaction entered using above series will not be honored by the company.
(PDI-May 7. 2003)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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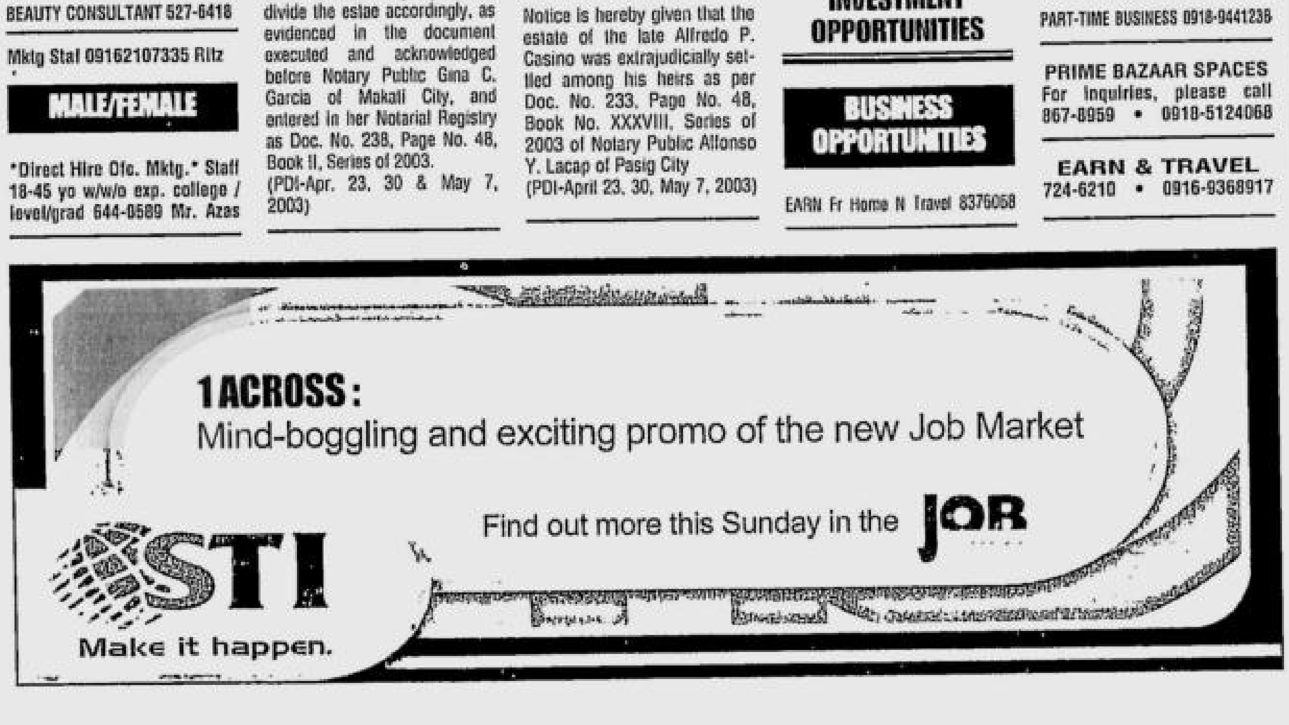
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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
BRANCH 50-MANILA

PROPMECH CORPORATION,
Plaintiff,

- versus - CIVIL CASE NO. 01-102051

VIVA SHIPPING LINES
COMPANY, INC., DOMINGO M.
REYES and RAMON REYES,
Defendants.
x- -x

SHERIFF'S NOTICE OF SALE

WHEREAS, by virtue of a Writ of Execution issued in the above-entitled case by the HON. WILLIAM SIMON P. PERALTA, Presiding Judge, Regional Trial Court of Manila, Branch 50, on March 20, 2003, for the recovery of the following: (a) Four Million Two Hundred Ninety Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Eleven Pesos and 100/19 (PhP. 4,299,911.19) representing the purchase price of the engines under the Sales Contract No. 97-1166, inclusive of the eighteen percent (18%) per annum interest as damages as provided for in the Sales Contract; (b) Four Hundred Ninety Eight Thousand Five Hundred Forty Three Pesos and One Centavo (PhP. 498,543.01) representing the remaining balance under Sales Contract No. 99-1287 inclusive of Twenty Four (24%) per annum as interest and penalties; (c) Eight Million One Hundred Twelve Thousand Nine Hundred Six Pesos and Eighty Two Centavos (PhP. 8,112,906.82) representing the total amount due from the purchase of various machine and engine parts, inclusive of Twenty Four percent (24%) interest as stipulated in the sales invoices; (d) Amount equivalent to Twenty Five (25%) percent of the total amount due and payable as payment of attorney's fees and costs of collection as provided for in the contract of Sales; (e) Amount of Nine Hundred Eighty Six Thousand Four Hundred Thirty Nine Pesos and Twenty Two Centavos (PhP.986,439.22) representing the amount of the unpaid balance under Sales Contract Nos. 99-1285 and 99-1302; and (f) the costs of suit and all expenses incurred in the implementation of the said writ, etc., LEVY was made on November 8, 2001 by the undersigned Sheriff upon all the rights, interest, title and participation which the defendants VIVA SHIPPING LINES COMPANY, INC., DOMINGO M. REYES and RAMON REYES may have in the following real properties together with all improvements thereon, which are more particularly described as follows:

TRANSFER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE
NO. T-45901

A parcel of land (Lot 228-B-4 of the Subdivision plan (LRC) Psd-68834 being a portion of Lot 2228-B, (LRC) Cad. Rec. No. 213), situated in the Barrio of Cotta, City of Lucena, Island of Luzon, Bounded on the N1., points 2 to 5 by Lot 2244, Lucena Cadastre; on the SE., points 5 to 6 by Lot 2228-B-1; on the S., points 6 to 1 by Lot 2228-B-2; and on the W., points 1 to 2 by Lot 2228-B-3, all of the subdivision plan, beginning at a point marked "1" on plan being S. 78 deg. 08'E., 162.95 m. from B. B. B. M.5, City of Lucena; thence N. 3 deg. 05'wo point 23; thence S. 76 deg. 46' E., 5.40 m. to point 3; thence S. 81 deg. 42,78 m. to point 4; thence N. 86 deg. Oo' E., 58.46 m. to point 5; thence S. 37 deg. 26" W., 26.66 m. to point 6; thence S. 86 deg.55' W., 70.71 m. to the point of beginning; containing an area of One Thousand Six Hundred Forty Six (1,646), Square Meters, more or less.

And
TRANSFER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE
NO. T-45941

A parcel of land (Lot 3 of the consolidation and subdivision plan, Pcs-04-002003, being a portion of the consolidation of Lots 2228-B-2 and 2228-B-3 (LRC) Psd-68834, L.R.C. Record No.), situated in the Barrio of Cotta, City of Lucena. Bounded on the SE., & S., along line 5-6 by Lot 2; along lines 6-7-8-9-10 by Lot 1; along line 10-11 by Lot 5; along line 11-12 by Lot 4 all of the consolidation and subdivision plan; on the N, along line 12-13 by Lot 2244 Cad-112, Lucena Cadastre; on the E., & N., along lines 13-14-1 by Lot 2228-B-4 (LRC) Psd-68834. Beginning at point marked 1 on plan, S. 82 deg., 38' E., 231.90 m. from B. L. B. M. No. 5, cad-112 Lucena Cadastre; thence 37 deg. 27' W., 11.05 m. thence N 3 deg. 09' W., 8.94 m. to 6; thence N. 3 deg. 09' W., 11.26 m. to point 7; thence S. 85 deg. 43' W., 4.01 m. to point 8; thence N. 2 deg. 55' W., 6.00 m. to point 11; thence N. 2 deg. 55' W., 62.00 m. to point 12; thence S. 76 deg. 46'E., 12.30 m. to point 13; thence S. 3 deg. 05' E., 25.88 m. to point 14; thence N. 86 deg. 55' E. 70.61 m. to the point of beginning containing an area of Three Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Four (3,624) square meters. All points referred to are indicated on the plan and are marked on the ground as follows: points 1,2,3,4, & 13-14 by old P.S. and the rest are P.S. cyl. Conc. mons. 15 x 60 cm; bearing true; date of original survey, July 1916-Dec. 1917, and that of the consolidation and subdivision survey, December 29, 1984, and was approved on January 14, 1985.

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-

NOW THEREFORE, by virtue of said Writ of Execution and in accordance with the provision of Rule 68, Section 3, in relation to Rule 39, Section 18 of the New Rules of Court in the Philippines the undersigned Sheriff of the Regional Trial Court of Manila, Branch 50, hereby announced that at exactly 10:00 o'clock in the morning but not later than 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of the 28th day of May, 2003 at the main entrance of Manila City Hall, facing Philippine Normal University (near the flagpole) the real properties described above will be sold at public auction for CASH and in PHILIPPINE CURRENCY to the highest bidder therefore to satisfy the judgment plus other necessary legal expenses.

Copies of this Sheriff's Notice of Sale will be published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, a newspaper edited and of general circulation in the City of Manila and Lucena City once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks.

This Sheriff's Notice of Sale will be posted in three (3) public conspicuous places in the City of Manila for the General Information of all who may be concerned.

Prospective buyers or bidders are hereby enjoined to investigate for themselves the title to the real properties above, and the encumbrances thereon, if any there be.

Manila, Philippines, April 2, 2003.

(Sgd.) ENRIQUITO A. VIOLETA
Sheriff IV
RTC-Manila Branch 50

WARNING

It is absolutely prohibited to remove deface or destroy this sheriff's Notice of Sale on or before the date of sale, **UNDER PENALTY OF LAW.**

Copy Furnished:

ATTY. JOSE ANTONIO V. EVANGELISTA
Counsel for the Plaintiff
Sycip Salazar Hernandez and Gatmaitan
4th Floor, Sycip Law All Asia Building
105 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

ATTY. JOSE AMOR M. AMORADO
Counsel for the defendants
3rd Floor, Prudential Life Building
P. Canlapan Street, Batangas City

PROPMECH CORPORATION
Marine Technology Center
Aduana cor. Arzobispo Sts.,
Intramuros, Manila

VIVA SHIPPING LINES COMPANY, INC.
DOMINGO M. REYES and RAMON REYES
Lucena City

(PDI – May 7 & 14, 2003)

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bataan Economic Zone

Tel. Nos. (047) 935-4004; (047) 561-2451; (047) 935-5002
Fax Nos. (047) 935-6046; E-Mail: bez@unet.net.ph
Website : www.peza.gov.ph

28 April 2003

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as listed below:

Name of Project : REHABILITATION OF SFB NOS. 3, 5, 6 & 11
Location : BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan

Prospective bidders must be duly licensed by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and registered as "Medium B" for buildings by the Inter-Agency Committee for Registration and Classification of Contractors for Government Infrastructure projects. Eligibility requirements/forms will be made available to Contractors upon submission of the below-listed required documents at the BAC Secretariat, EMD Office, 2nd Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan, as follows:

1. Letter of Intent
2. Certificate of Contractor's Renewal from PCAB and License (Bring Original copy for authentication purposes)

The particulars and schedule of activities for the bidding process are listed below:

Name of Project	Issuance and Price of Eligibility Forms	Deadline for submission of accomplished eligibility forms	Issuance of Bid Documents	Price of Non-refundable fee for bid Documents	Approved Budget for the Contract	Duration of Contract	Pre-Bid Conference	Submission and Opening of Bids
Rehabilitation of SFB Nos. 3, 5, 6 & 11	Php200.00 May 5-9, 2003 BAC Secretariat, EMD off. 2nd Flr. BEZ Admin. Bldg.	May 14, 2003 5:00 P.m BAC Secretariat, EMD off. 2nd Flr. BEZ Admin. Bldg.	May 26-28, 2003 BAC Secretariat, EMD off. 2nd Flr. BEZ Admin. Bldg.	Php 3,000.00 Finance Div. Grd. Flr BEZ Admin Bldg.	Php 22,804,020.00	385 Calendar days	June 5, 2003 2:00 P.M. Audio-Visual Rm. 2nd Flr., BEZ Admin. Bldg.	June 23, 2003 2:00 P.M. Audio-Visual Rm. 2nd Flr BEZ Admin. Bldg.

SCOPE OF WORK:

1. Re-roofing
2. Rehab/repair of comfort rooms
3. Plumbing works (water & sewer lines, fixtures & fittings)
4. Repainting of exterior and interior walls
5. Fire lighting equipment and accessories
6. Tileworks, window frames, glass and glazing
7. Electrical works
8. Replacement of ceiling caves downspoute
9. Other repair works

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS:

1. Generator, two (2) units (owned)
2. Welding machine two (2) units (owned)

The two (2) envelope system shall be adopted and the provisions of Executive Order No. 40, Series of 2001 and its implementing Rules and Regulations shall apply in the bidding.

For further particulars, please contact Ms. Catalina C. Desamito/Engr. Aniceto P. Gonzales, BAC Secretariat, EMD Office, 2nd Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan or at Tel. No. (047) 935-4008.

The PEZA reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any defect or informality contained therein and to accept and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the government. The PEZA neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) DIONISIO T. SAMEN
Chairperson, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI–April 30 & May 7, 2003)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

TRANSCO INTEGRATED TRAINEESHIP PROGRAM

In order to provide new graduates of engineering and technical/vocational courses the opportunity to acquire actual experience in the field of electrical power transmission, the National Transmission Corporation (TransCo), created by virtue of Republic Act 9136 (the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001) is a government-owned and controlled corporation that has assumed the electrical transmission functions in the major Philippine grids, announces the offering of its Integrated Traineeship Program, specifically the cadetship and Apprenticeship Programs for year 2003.

- Cadetship Program - on the job training for a period of six (6) months program for graduates of Electrical and Electronics & Communications engineering courses.
- Apprenticeship Program - on the job training for a period of six (6) months for graduates of technical/vocational courses (Technician, Electrician, Mechanic, Lineman).

Qualification/Requirements:

1. Not more than twenty five (25) years of age
2. Residents of Metro Manila
3. Must pass the TransCo psychological examination for Apprenticeship Program
4. Must pass the TransCo psychological and technical examinations for Cadetship Program
5. Official Transcript of Records (no failing grades in major subjects)

Interested applicants should personally apply and accomplish application form at Human Resource Training Division, Human Resources Department, Ground Floor, Power Center Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City from **May 5 to 16, 2003** at 1:30 p.m.

For Cadetship Program, only those who pass the psychological examination will be qualified to take the technical examination scheduled on may 31, 2003 (Saturday).

HUMAN RESOURCE TRAINING DIVISION
Human Resources Department
Power Center Building, Diliman, Quezon City
Telephone No. 922-5873

(PDI - May 4 & 7, 2003)

WARNING TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given to the Public, more particularly lot buyers in the Provinces of Sorsogon, Albay, Camarines Sur & Camarines Norte

This is to inform the public that, we, spouses **TOMAS M. VILLASENOR** and **RUPERTA STO. DOMINGO-VILLASENOR** are still living in good health, under the care of Emiliana V. Fernando and presently residing at No. 546 Rizal Street, Baliuag, Bulacan, contrary to previous year's advertisement by scrupulous individuals regarding our death.

That, we categorically deny any knowledge of **sale** of our existing real estate properties located at the above-mentioned provinces to any persons, natural or judicial entities, more particularly to the following:

Mr. CONRAD VILLASENOR
Mr. CONNELL S. DE VERA
Mr. AMADOR DE JOYA, JR.
PRE-PAINTED METALS PRODUCTS
LLENNOC INTEGRATED STEEL
EZEKIEL TRADING & CONSTRUCTION

That, any transactions by way of **"Deed of Sale or Pacto De Retro Sale"** bearing our specimen signatures are mere falsifications and do not reflect our own voluntary acts and deeds.

That, we hereby appoint **Emiliana V. Fernando and ORO VILLA BUILDERS & MULTI-TRADING CO., INC.**, to facilitate the legal transfer of ownerships to the latter corporation of all these existing properties for administration and disposals.

That, should you be one of the victims, please contact any of the following:

Emiliana V. Fernando	**0916-3469440**	**Baliuag, Bulacan**
Atty. Jose Cruz	**0916-6967902**	**Baliuag, Bulacan**
Germie Delos Santos	**0917-7410526**	**Parañaque City**

(Sgd.) **TOMAS VILLASENOR**

(Sgd.) **RUPERTA STO. DOMINGO-VILLASENOR**

(PDI - May 7, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
HOUSING AND LAND USE REGULATORY BOARD
Cordillera Administrative Region
Botanical Garden, Leonard Wood Road, Baguio City
Tel. No. 442-5338

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **EMILIO S. LIM, JR.** - President of **ESLA Land Developers, Inc.** has filed with the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board a sworn registration statement for the sale of residential condominium units at **SOUTH CHINA SEA - GARDEN VILLAS** located at Green Valley Village, Sto. Tomas, Baguio City specifically identified/described as lot 3 of the consolidation-subdivision plan (LRA Pcs-31123); and that the registration statement and all papers attached thereto are available for inspection during business hours by any person having legal interest thereon and upon proper application and that copies thereof shall be furnished to such person upon payment of the proper fee.

Any person with valid objection in the Registration of the project may file his objection in writing with the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, Botanical Garden, Leonard Wood Road, Baguio City, not later than fifteen (15) days from the date of the last publication.

City of Baguio, Philippines, 21st of April 2003.

(Sgd.) ANTONIO P. URATA
Regional Officer

(PDI - May 7 & 14, 2003)

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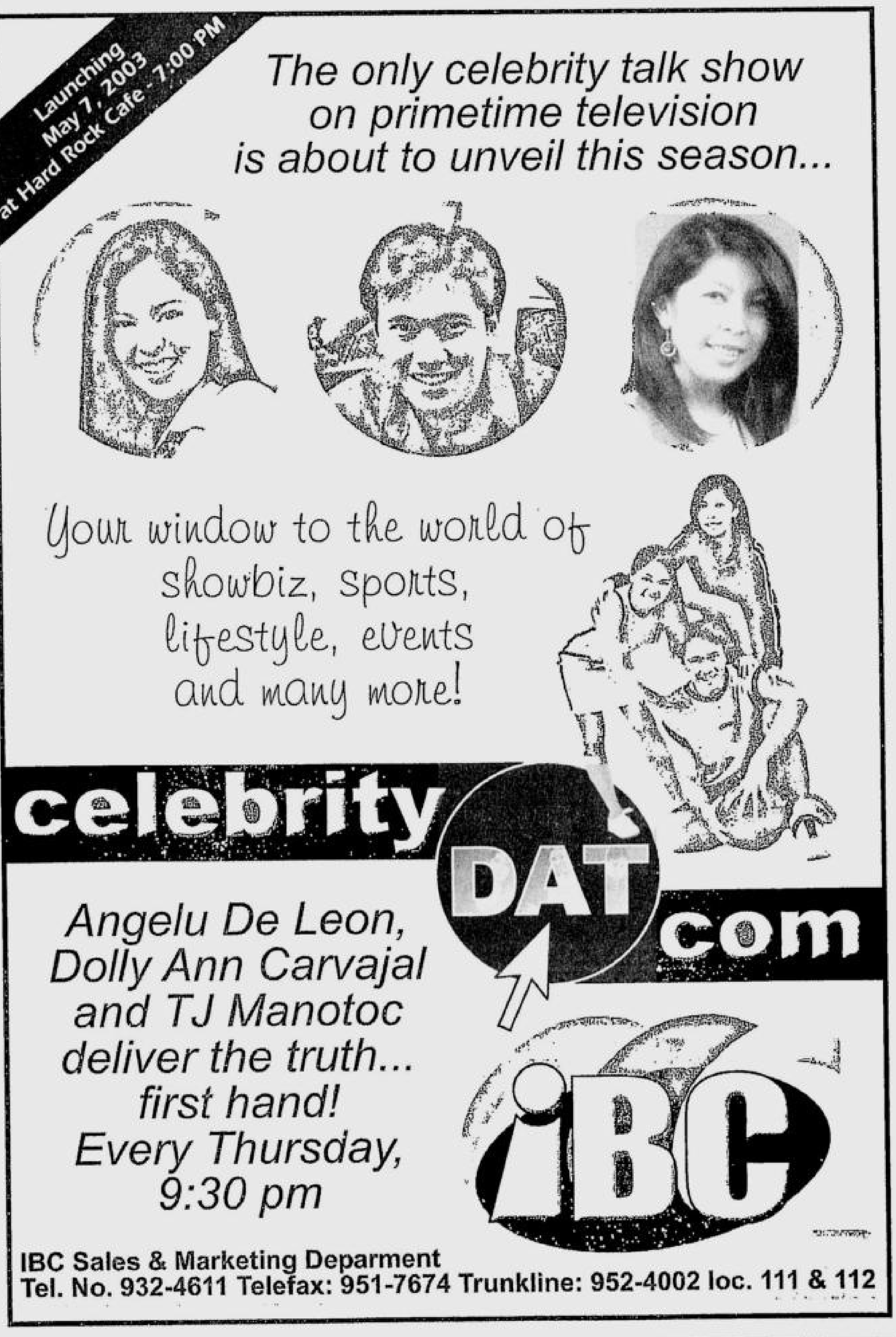

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IN MEMORIAM ✝

VICTOR PAUL IPAPO DE LOS SANTOS

"Veepee"

August 20, 1975 – May 7, 1998

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered today at the following churches:

Holy Family Parish Chapel	*Filinvest Homes I, QC*	*7:00 p.m.*
Parish of the Holy Sacrifice	*UP Diliman, QC*	*12:00 noon, 6:00 p.m.*
San Jose Manggagawa Chapel	*Loyola Subdivision, Marikina*	*6:00 a.m.*
Christ the King	*E. Rodriguez Ave., QC*	*6:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m.*
Shrine of Mt. Carmel	*Doña J. Rodriguez Ave., New Manila, QC*	*7:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m.*
Mary the Queen Parish	*Greenhills, San Juan*	*7:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m.*
Sacred Heart Parish	*Sct. Ybardolaza, Kamuning, QC*	*7:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m.*
Nuestra Señora de los Remedios	*Malate, Manila*	*7:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m.*
Santuario de San Antonio	*Forbes Park, Makati*	*7:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m.*
St. Jerome Emiliani & Sta. Susana Parish	*Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa*	*6:00 p.m.*
St. James the Great Parish	*Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa*	*6:00 p.m.*
St. Francis of Assisi	*Meycauayan, Bulacan*	*7:30 a.m., 6:30 p.m.*

His ashes will finally be interred today at 10:00 a.m. at the Ossuary of the Shrine of Mt. Carmel, Doña Juana Rodriguez, New Manila, QC.

"LOVE... bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."
1 Corinthians 13:7-8

Dad, Mom and Mareese

MARIA C. DE LA REA vda. DE PAGSUGUIRON

Died peacefully on May 5, 2003
at the age of 76.

Interment will be on May 8, 2003 at Gethsemane Cemetery, Balayan, Batangas.

MELVIN C. YABUT

Peacefully joined his Creator and his wife Carmelita
on May 1, 2003 at the age of 63

His loving children and children-in-law Kym and Bombie, Kirk, Kaye and Allan, Lance and Maristel and Mervyn; grandchildren Kyle, Louie and Mikel; brothers and sisters and in-laws, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz (inside Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.)

Interment will be on Thursday, May 8, 2003 at Manila Memorial Park at 3:00 p.m.

Message of Thanks

"The Lord is my light and salvation –"
Psalm 27

WITH SINCERE GRATITUDE

We, the family of

CARLOS MIGUEL B. PALANCA

who joined his Creator
on April 22, 2003

wish to convey our deep appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and cards of sympathy, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral Mass and interment rites, and condoled with us in our hour of bereavement.

She lived a life that's full...
She was a mommy to everyone she knew..
We will miss you terribly

EVANGELINA G. SAMONTE

Died peacefully on May 4, 2003
at the age of 81.

Her husband **Diosdado (†)**; children **Mel & Belle, Danee, Chet (†) & Marie, Vangie & Leo**; grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nephews, nieces and other relatives request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City and will be transferred at the family residence, 99 Sandico St., Poblacion, Bocaue, Bulacan on Thursday, May 8, 2003.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 10, 2003 at the Bocaue Catholic Cemetery after the 2 p.m. Mass.

In Loving Memory
on the 13th Death Anniversary of

MAJOR HERMITO P. HERRERA (Ret.)

November 2, 1919 — May 7, 1990

Masses will be offered at the following:

Jesus the Divine Healer Parish, *Tahanan Village, Parañaque City*	*6:00 a.m*
St. Joseph Cathedral, *Balanga, Bataan*	*6:30 a.m.*
Presentation of the Child Jesus Parish, *BF Homes, Parañaque City*	*6:45 a.m.*
Ntra. Sra. De Guia, *Ermita, Manila*	*12 noon*
Our Lady of the Pillar Parish, *Pilar, Bataan*	*5:15 p.m.*
Our Lady of the Pillar Parish, *Pilar Village, Las Piñas City*	*6:00 p.m.*
Parish of the Resurrection, *BF Homes, Parañaque City*	*6:30 p.m.*

PORFIRIO S. ENRIQUEZ

Peacefully joined our Creator
on 2 May 2003 at the age of 71.

His remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapels, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on 9 May 2003 at the La Loma Catholic Cemetery following the 8 a.m. Mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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MESSAGE OF THANKS · DEATH ANNIVERSARY
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"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Corinthians 5:4-5

BRIGIDO "Roland" C. GATINGA, SR.

Peacefully joined his Creator on April 30, 2003 at the age of 64

His loving wife **PRESCY**; children **RONNIE, MARICRIS, GLENDA, ROWENA, & JAY-R**; children-in-law **LYNN, JOSEPH, & JOEL**, grandchildren **CHRISTIAN, BEA & JOHN CEDRIC**; sisters **LILY, ANGELING, SUSIE, GLORIA, MILA & JEANNE**, brothers-in-law **ARDEN, ROMY & CESAR**, and the rest of the family request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul

His body lies in state at #108 Pias, Mapandan, Pangasinan.

Interment will be on May 8, 2003 (Thursday) after the 8:30 a.m. Holy Mass at St. Joseph Parish Church

CLASSIFIEDS

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON GOOD GOVERNMENT
IRC BUILDING #82 EDSA
MANDALUYONG CITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO REBID

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), Region 8, invites interested parties to participate in the sealed bidding for the lease of the ground floor of the People's Center and Library located at Real St., Tacloban City as venue for "Summer Trade Exhibit" from **May 15, 2003 to July 15, 2003.**

The bidding guidelines will be available at PCGG Office, Asset Management Department, 3rd Floor, IRC Building, 82 EDSA Mandaluyong City and at the PCGG Regional Office, Nipa Hut, Jones St., Tacloban City, until **May 8, 2003.** For inquiries, please contact Darwin C. Altea at Telephone No. 726-0034 and Renor O. Dauag at Telephone No. (053) 321-3413.

Pre-qualification requirements should be submitted on or before **May 8, 2003**, while bids will be received, opened and tabulated at 10:00 A.M. on **May 9, 2003** in the presence of the bidders at the PCGG Office, Asset Management Department, 3rd Floor, IRC Building, 82 EDSA, Mandaluyong City.

(Sgd.) **RENOR O. DAUAG**
Regional Representative

(PDI--May 6, 7 & 8, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
INTER-AGENCY BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PROCUREMENT SERVICE (PS)** invites G-EPS registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF MECHANICAL STAMPING MACHINE for the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).**

The approved budget for this contract is **P2,850,000.00.**

All interested parties are invited to attend the **Pre-Bid Conference** that will be held on **May 13, 2003, 9:30 A.M., Tuesday**, at the **PS Conference Room, 2nd Floor, PS Complex, Cristobal St., Paco, Manila.**

The bid documents shall be available at the **PS-PURCHASING DIVISION** starting **April 30, 2003** upon payment of non-refundable fee of **One Thousand Pesos (Php 1,000.00).**

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the Office of the Head of the IABAC Secretariat at the above mentioned address. Deadline for submission and opening of bids shall be on **May 29, 2003 at 9:30 A.M., Thursday.**

For more information, please call the **PS-Purchasing Division** at telephone nos. **563-94-02** or **563-93-74.**

PS reserves the right to waive any formality in the response to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. PS further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) EDUARDO P. OPIDA
Chairman, IABAC

(PDI — May 7, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
INTER-AGENCY BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PROCUREMENT SERVICE (PS)** invites **G-EPS** registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF BOND AND COPY PAPER for the PS Stocks.**

The approved budget for this contract is **P14,756,500.00.**

All interested parties are invited to attend the **Pre-Bid Conference** that will be held on **May 13, 2003, 1:30 P.M., Tuesday, at the PS Conference Room, 2nd Floor, PS Complex, Cristobal St., Paco, Manila.**

The bid documents shall be available at the **PS-PURCHASING DIVISION** starting **April 30, 2003** upon payment of non-refundable fee of **One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 1,500.00).**

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the Office of the Head of the IABAC Secretariat at the above mentioned address. Deadline for submission and opening of bids shall be on **May 29, 2003 at 1:30 p.m., Thursday.**

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(Sgd.) EDUARDO P. OPIDA
Chairman, IABAC

(PDI–May 7, 2003)

email: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

PEOPLE at WORK

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo** ◎ Subsection Editor **Regina Galang Reyes**

CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Mentoring develops high potential employees

By Josie O. Santamaria

(This is the eighth of a series of articles on career development strategies.)

MENTORING is defined as a one-to-one relationship in which an expert or a senior person voluntarily gives time to teach, support and encourage another. The relationship is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee's (protégé's) life and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time.

Coaching is different from mentoring. Coaching is done with a person who needs to develop or enhance his competencies so that he can perform his current tasks according to, or even exceeding, the standards. Mentoring is done for a high potential person so that the competencies he acquires can be used for his current tasks and also for a future job assignment. Coaching can be done for a team to improve their performance while mentoring is always individualized and one-on-one.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Benefits

Does the mentor benefit from the relationship? It would seem that it is only the protégé who benefits from the relationship. But one-sided relationships do not work as well as reciprocal relationships where there is an exchange of some kind.

The reward for mentoring is mainly psychic. Even if a company has a formal mentoring program, mentors don't usually get any additional financial reward for transferring his expertise to a protégé. The "reward" comes from being recognized for his expertise which is reflected in his own performance appraisal. Another "reward" is the protégé's appreciation of the mentor. In the mentoring process, the mentor rediscovers that he has the capacity to share and to give, without asking for anything in return.

Experiences

Some senior executives were asked what they found rewarding in their mentoring assignments. The replies given by some of them are as follows:

- "His requests for assistance and the fact that he kept coming to our meetings made me realize that he valued his learning."
- "I felt I was responsible for making her stay in our company and in the functional area of which she is now the head."
- "Seeing his excitement and enthusiasm - watching him gain insights into concepts which he previously found difficult to grasp."
- "Watching and listening to him present a marketing plan almost flawlessly. To think that he struggled initially to learn how to make one."

Legacy

The famous developmental psychologist Erick Erickson described the eight stages of man and the developmental tasks a person has to successfully hurdle so that he can move on to the next stage. The seventh stage is that of generativity which can shed light on what a mentor can derive from a mentoring relationship.

Erickson said that every one has a strong longing for one's work and influence to "live on", and that this is an important life goal. Nurturing a young adult, helping him develop a positive self-image, facilitating his efforts to form and live out his hopes and wishes can fulfill the "generative" needs of the mentor.

This is why a successful parent wants to pass on his expertise in a profession or craft to a talented child. If one has no child, or the child is disinterested, or the child has no talent, the parent looks for a talented person on whom he can invest himself. This is how he thinks he can insure his "generativity."

When a person mentors, it shows an attitude of advocacy. It shows that the mentor wants others to succeed. And the wonderful thing about this attitude is that it's contagious. People who have been mentored and who have had happy mentoring experiences, are more likely to mentor others. And so the circle grows.

The mentor is thus able to pay back, in some measure, what his own mentor had done for him. He is also able to repay the intrinsic benefits he has derived from his profession.

(Ms Santamaria is president of Career Systems, Inc., a leading consultancy firm. Philippine Daily Inquirer and Career Systems, Inc. will be presenting a special People at Work Live! Seminar Series organized by Optimus Managers & Advisors Inc., this May 27, 28 and 29 on Career Development Strategies. For details, call 8978808 loc. 554.)

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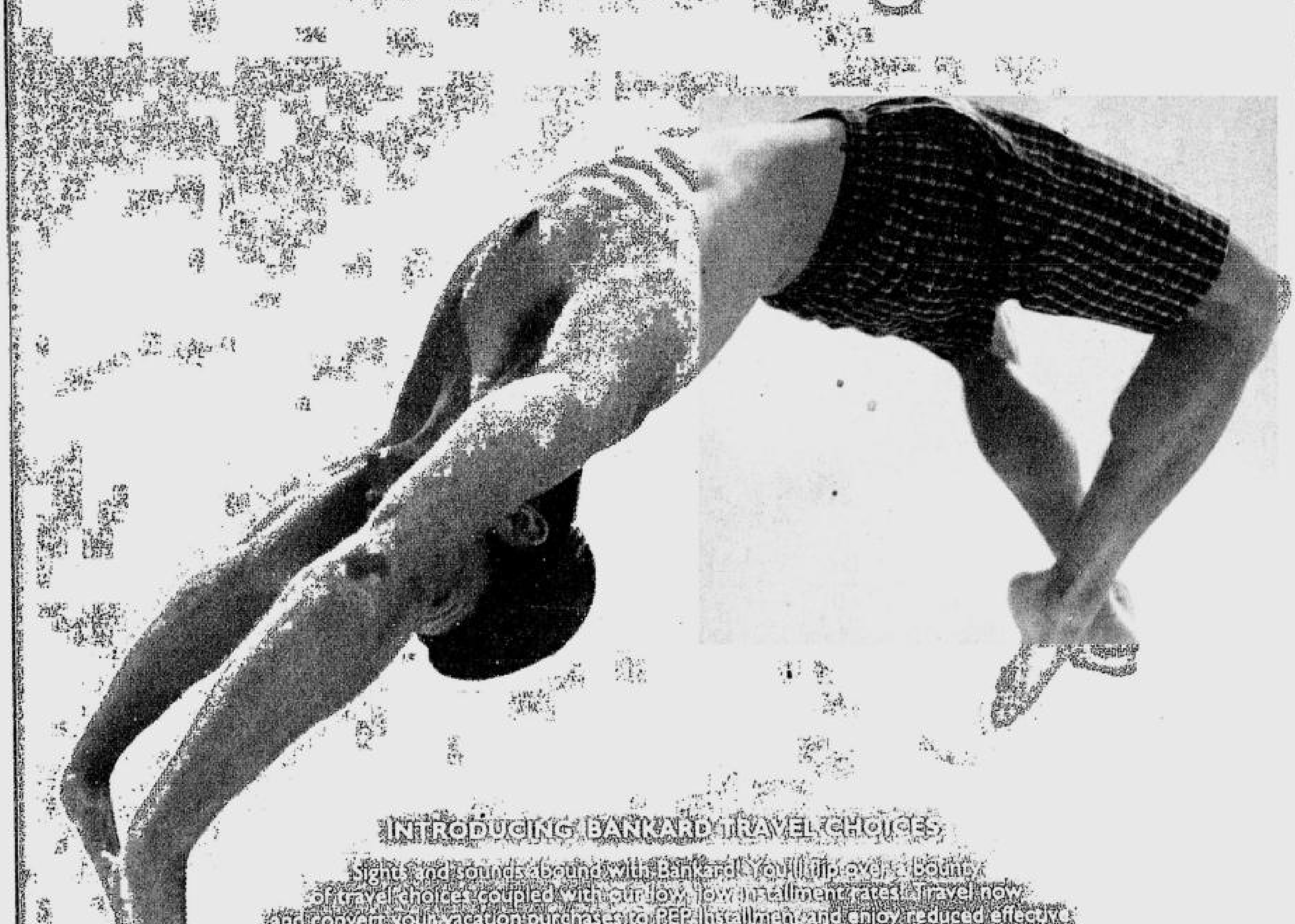

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• Garwood Park Hotel	PhP6422 or PhP626.06/mo.
• Tambuli Beach Club	PhP6632 or PhP646.53 /mo.

Inclusions: Roundtrip economy fare Manila/Cebu/Manila, roundtrip airport transfers, accommodations, daily breakfast.

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• The Legend Hotel	PhP7685 or PhP749.19/mo.
• Hotel Fleuris	PhP8000 or PhP779.90/mo.

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3 Days/2 Nights DAVAO

• Malagos Garden Resort	PhP7153 or PhP697.32/mo
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Inclusions: Roundtrip economy fare Manila/Davao/Manila, roundtrip airport transfers, accommodations, daily breakfast.

3 Days/2 Nights BOHOL

• MetroCentre Hotel & Convention Centre	PhP7306 or PhP712.24/mo.
• Bohol Beach Club	PhP8106 or PhP790.23 /mo.

Inclusions: Roundtrip economy fare Manila/Bohol/Manila, roundtrip airport transfers, accommodations, daily breakfast.

Above rates exclude all applicable taxes. Promo rates valid until May 15, 2004 (except for Christmas, New Year and Chinese New Year season.)
Bookings must be made at least 7 calendar days before departure date.
Call Pan Malayan Travel & Tours at 844-1216, 844-2252 or 889-8319 for details.

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LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso ▫ Chief of Correspondents Pam Pastor

2bU

to be young • to be you • to be young • to be young • to be • To be you!

We love you, Mom!

I Love YOU MomeEEE!

. . . because you carried us around in your womb for nine months.

. . . because you sweated and pushed and screamed to get us out into this imperfect but beautiful world.

. . . because the 20 pounds you gained and haven't lost since can be blamed on us.

. . . because you lost countless hours of sleep to feed us and calm us whenever we started wailing.

. . . because you didn't give us up for adoption, not even when we wouldn't stop crying.

. . . because you thought we were adorable even when our baby teeth were falling out.

. . . because you woke up to make us breakfast no matter how tired you were the previous night.

. . . because you brought us to school every day.

. . . because you taught us our ABCs and 1+1s and remained patient when we got things wrong.

. . . because you kissed our scraped knees and made our tummies feel better.

. . . because you fixed our hair in the morning.

. . . because you're always there to give us a hug.

. . . because you talked Dad into getting us our first bikes.

. . . because you sewed back on our missing buttons.

. . . because you taught us to strive hard for our own future.

. . . because you gave without expecting much in return.

. . . because you never stayed mad at us for too long.

. . . because you speak of us with so much pride.

. . . because you taught us how to walk in high heels.

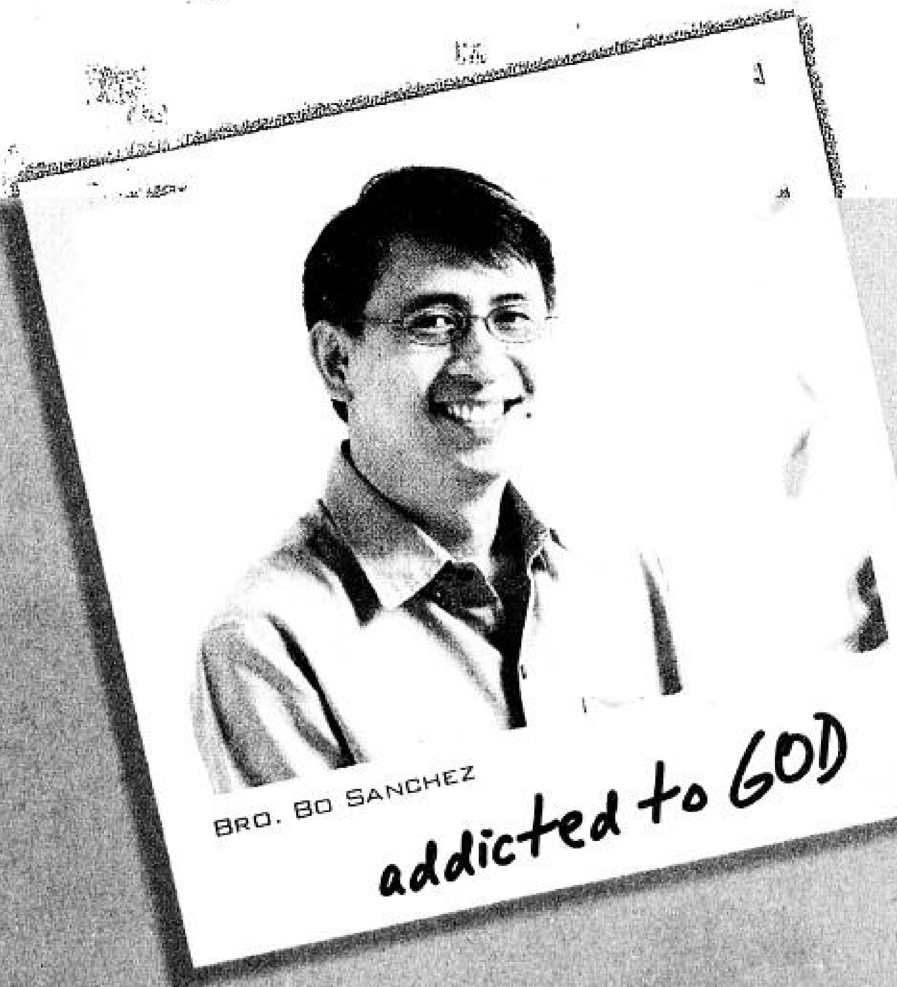
. . . because you've seen us through traumatic moments like the prom and our first relationship.

. . . because you're willing to sacrifice everything just to make us happy.

. . . because you love us selflessly, no matter how stubborn we are.

This is our tribute to mothers

Devotion.



D Power of Two! U & Me, ok? "Great is our Lord & mighty in power, His understanding has no limit." - Love, God

PSALM 147:5

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Why women are really the stronger sex

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

AS A high school sophomore, we were required to watch a documentary called "The Miracle of Life." The video showed a sperm and egg cell forming a zygote (fertilized egg) and also a close-up of a woman in the middle of giving birth.

The sight of a purple head emerging from the womb almost traumatized us, or at least made us spend the rest of the film with our hands on our faces. Labor was like giving birth to a watermelon.

From that moment on, mothers became the epitome of strength and endurance for me. After all, a whole human being passed through their bodies.

I sat with my mom, who amazed me for going through this ordeal three times, one breakfast morning. People might say that it's a man's world, but it is definitely a woman's strength that sustains it.

Challenges

Morning sickness is generally what future moms dread most (*see related survey*). Eating seems to be unnecessary, because they feel nauseated all the time. Eating right and avoiding junk food are challenges they have to face every day.

Most pregnant women also experience some food or smell phobias. My mother said she turned nauseous at the smell of Dial soap. It was unfortunate for my uncle, who used the soap. He must have felt unwanted after every bath.

Craving for certain foods is also common during pregnancy. According to my mom, when she was pregnant with me, she had an inordinate appetite for *singkamas*. With my younger brother, it was melon. Whether or not there is scientific basis for *paglilihi*, I did end up with fair skin while my brother has a darker shade.

Because she was eating for two, my mom recalled raiding the refrigerator at midnight.

All the changes going through a woman's body during the initial stage of pregnancy are indicated by nausea and vomiting. The first trimester involves radical changes, with the embryo forming just a week after fertilization. This is also the time for organ development. Cells divide and form the different parts of the body in a 5-cm fetus.

Although my mom had three pregnancies in her lifetime, two boys and one girl (me), only two survived.

Mom was still teaching the first time she was pregnant. My older brother died around five days after birth, leaving me the elder of two kids. Mom quit teaching after that, opting to just conduct lecture classes.

Starting right

Like many moms today, she read to her unborn child to start developing in it a love for reading. She also listened to classical music to stimulate the baby's brain. She would subconsciously do things that she wanted her child to take interest in after birth.

Of course, Filipinos, like the Chinese, have their share of superstitious beliefs related to pregnancy. Mom recalled that the week after giving birth to my Kuya, her aunt refused to let her bathe. She was "smoked" instead over a pot of live charcoal supposedly to reduce swelling and cleanse the body.

The well-meaning aunt also boiled some seeds and poured it over my mom, who was so disgusted she did not agree to undergo those "rituals" again in her subsequent pregnancies.

Nurturing life

My mom was sedated through all three pregnancies. Recalling the 27 months spent with a child in her belly, she said the best thing about pregnancy was the anticipation of motherhood and the things she would do with her child. She bought baby things even before the baby was due. She followed diet restrictions to ensure the life of her child.

My mom had three pieces of advice on motherhood: One, never get pregnant outside of marriage. Two, always be optimistic since the baby senses a mom's anxiety. And three, commit yourself to motherhood so it would be easier to make sacrifices.

Ultimately, moms are the anchor of life. Even if you don't like the commercialization of Mother's Day, you still should take time to honor your mother, if only to thank her for the nine months she spent preparing you for life outside her womb.

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com

The 2bU! Mom survey

Let's listen to Women talk about their pregnancy blues

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

ALTHOUGH the prospect of motherhood is exciting, nine months of carrying a child isn't exactly a bed of roses. It makes the everyday challenges trivial compared to what mothers go through.

This week, 2bU! asks moms: "What's the hardest thing about being pregnant?"

You can't see your toes.—**Nila, mother of three**

[You have to] be careful because you have someone inside you.— **Annie, mother of two**

Morning sickness that [actually] goes on the whole day. You have no choice but to listen to your husband chant, "Nothing in life is permanent, including pain," and pretend it's not painful.—**Jing**

It was difficult to handle the hormones and [I] felt alone handling it. The weight of the world was in my tummy.—**Marjorie, mother of one**

[The fear] that something wrong might happen. You dream about it.—**Tata, mother of two**

The most difficult part of pregnancy is the first trimester, particularly the food cravings.—**Dessa, mother of five**

Managing to look and feel pretty with a big tummy and an even bigger nose, [and] getting a good sleeping position on your ninth month.—**Jane, mother of two**

Waddling.—**Helen, mother of three**

[The] first three months [were the hardest] because of hormonal changes, dizziness and vomiting every morning, [and] loss of appetite for particular foods.— **Olive, mother of three**

Not being able to eat junk food and play badminton.—**Cindy, mother of two**

The weight wait.—**Millie, mother of one**

Having sex at nine months, going up and down the stairs, and being forced to drink milk.—**Bubbles, mother of two**

[The hardest things] were the first quarter when you vomit and have a hard time eating, and the last quarter [when you have] a hard time breathing especially (when you are) sleeping. The baby keeps moving.—**Cachie, mother of three**

The hardest part was actually going into labor and delivery.—**Alice, mother of three**

With reports from Amity Tan

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10 things we should remember when dealing with Mother

By Ivy S. Papa
2bU! Correspondent

ALAM MO BA KUNG ANONG ORAS NA?!
AGR
ILLUSTRATIONS: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

EVERYONE has a different relationship with his or her mother. Some of us are very fortunate to have a friendship with our mothers, while others may even go as far as regard them as the adversary. Most young people experience this particular rebellious phase in their lives, and while this may generally be perceived as a stage that normal and healthy kids go through, when it is finally over, scars do stay. Hurtful words would still have been uttered and offensive deeds couldn't be undone. Maybe misunderstandings and arguments are a part of this special relationship between mothers and their children, but if we consciously try to avoid them, then perhaps regret wouldn't be so great when it comes later on.

Here are some things we ought to keep in mind when dealing with the most special woman in our lives:

❑ She was also somebody's child. We might not understand her position now, not having been made a parent yet, but she definitely knows where we're coming from. So, when we feel misunderstood, most probably, it's the other way around.

❑ We might not have asked to be born, but we definitely owe her our life. Children tend to speak thoughtless and ungrateful remarks like this when they haven't exactly been having a great time, but then again, they don't usually feel the need to consider all the things that have been done for them. Honestly? We take a lot of things for granted.

❑ Our pain is her pain, only doubled in magnitude. Whenever we hurt, she suffers everything along with us. We should never feel as though we are alone in our problems.

❑ These are dangerous times. If she seems OA about us and our protection, it's because she has reason to be. It's true that we shouldn't be stifled because of fear, but we must make an effort to understand her apprehensions. As long as we still live with her, we must be conscientious about informing her if we're going to be late or whom we're going to be with. It's not being a sissy; it's being considerate.

❑ She had also once been young, with her own dreams and insecurities. Remember that she's a human being in her own right and she would be easier to relate to. If our minds can transcend that mental picture limiting us to our "traditional" roles, we'll be able to appreciate Mom better.

❑ Between a girl/guy and her, she's really the one who would climb mountains, walk on hot coals, fetch the moon for you, et cetera, et cetera. So just in case we have to choose between some other person and her, we must consider this thought: in the end, the person whom we can count on to be willing to make sacrifices for us is our mother.

❑ Motherhood is one of the most important roles, if not the most important, she will have played in her life, so even in the heat of the moment, we should still try to go easy on the criticisms. Every little one is a slap in her face, considering that we supposedly are her source of joy and from the time that we were conceived up to the present, she has done everything she could to raise us to be happy and well-adjusted persons.

❑ We only have one mother. Problems always have solutions and we should never even think disowning thoughts or do anything drastic that could possibly sever ties forever.

❑ She might not always know what's best for us, but, chances are, she always knows better than we do. It's a simple case involving numbers. She has accumulated more years and with the years came experiences. She has been around longer and has had more time to wise up. Never dismiss what she's saying as mere blathering.

❑ Mother won't live forever, at least, not in the physical form. Instead of focusing on our differences, we should try to work around them and concentrate our efforts on creating beautiful moments with her that we can cherish forever.

It is true that some of these points may not be applicable to everybody. Some mothers are not exactly as sainted as the one I had depicted, but I think it is very rare that we come across one of the V.C. Andrews variety. Also, some people may have special women in their lives who may not technically be their mothers, but have become surrogates in the absence of the biological one. In any case, we should all take time to manifest our love and gratitude to them not only when Mothers' Day rolls around, but constantly, every day of our lives.

'Aside from your biological mom, who do you consider your maternal figure?'

By Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

OUR mothers cannot be with us 24 hours a day, everyday. Once we step out of our homes, other people become surrogate moms even without their knowing. From teachers to girl friends, there are people who help us become who we are.

I only have one person I consider my mom, and that's my biological mom. I swear. I don't think anyone could possibly come close (considering what) we've gone through together. Anyone else would have headed for the hills if they had been in my mother's shoes at those critical moments.— **Margot, 20**

My best friend. She may only be a few months older than me, and we may have known each other only for the past five years but she's been more than a best friend to me. She's there whether I need her or not.. feels my joys and pains, cries and laughs with me.—**Zizzy, 21**

My Tita Patsy, my mom's younger sister. Since my mom... works all the time, my Tita is the one who takes me out and talks to me. Happy Mothers Day!— **Trina, 19**

I consider my lola my second mom because when I was younger she was always the first to comfort us whenever family problems arose.—**Giles, 23**

My Dad since he has his "mother tendencies." He also cooks. *Siya pa yung makulit pero buti na lang* he doesn't really care much about the girls I date.— **Jeffrey, 19**

My other "mom" would be my aunt (from my father's side), who is also my one and only *ninang*. She's cool and loads of fun. Plus, she gave me my name. What I love most about her is that she's loves making hot chocolate and baking deelish goodies for me.—**Mimi Tiu, 23, Candy**

I don't need one because for me, my mom is already perfect and she's all that I need.—**Nina, 17**

My *yaya* Letty. Typical loveable *yaya*. She does the dirty work of taking care of me, cooking, pampering, pushing me to study harder.—**Fatima, 19**

My friend Kaz's mom. She's very understanding and supportive, such an angel!—**Cereb, 19**

My two women bosses, Ms Diane Alibudbud and Ms Menchie Mina. Their motherly instincts at work never fail to amaze me.—**Martin Cervantes, 22**

My aunt, Mama Violet. She took care of me when I was younger and she has always been there for me. I love her very much!—**Austie, 20, AdMU**

My theology teacher, Ms Natividad. Her caring and nurturing qualities (are like) those of my mom's.—**Minnie Torres, 20**

My grandmas. They're very different but they have one thing in common—their love for their grandkids. They're a blessing.—**Pam, 22**

ILLUSTRATIONS: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

When I was in the dorm, my perfect Ms Ma. Nezette Briones.—**Irene Lui, 21**

My good friends because my mom's never really been there so I found comfort in them.— **Xara, 18**

I guess I could consider my GF as a mother in my life because of the way she cares for me.—**VF**

My *ninang*. Her name is Auntie Lally and she is the same age as my mom.—**Wawie, 19**

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Motherly characteristics we wish we had

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

LOVING, caring, understanding—these are the traits our mothers innately have, but these aren't the only stuff they're made up of. Mothers are much more than just emotional pillars, and their many desirable attributes constantly inspire us to be better people: sons and daughters, individuals, even parents.

Here are some of our mothers' best qualities we all wish we can possess, especially when we become parents ourselves.

Her enviable kitchen capabilities. Our moms may not be certificate-bearers from Heny Sison's cooking workshops, but that doesn't mean they can't whip up a slew of appetizing treats. Nothing will truly beat mom's pots and pots of beef *caldereta*, *kare-kare* and even *adobo*—and it's not as if she spends dad's savings just for meals. When times are trying and pockets have holes, shake mom's hand because she can still come up with a dish that satisfies the tummy and doesn't threaten the family's financial state.

Her spic-and-span specialty. Most moms are obsessive-compulsive neat freaks, and thank heavens that they are. More than the basic clean a typical maid achieves, what a mother ends up with is a sparkling finish that mirrors not only neat freakiness, but a great sense of style as well. Most probably, mothers invented the adage, "Have a place for everything and keep everything in its place," because they undeniably walk this talk. Mothers are the best organizers in the world. They box everything and put labels on each. They make sure everything is beautifully where it's supposed to be.

Her unparalleled thoughtfulness. Remember all those notes mom would leave you before she went to work, or the wow-inducing *pasalubong* she brought home after all those exhausting hours of waiting? How about the sneaky phone calls from the office just to whisper "I love you," or the surprise gift you forgot you wanted? And all those very early mornings when she'd drag her bum to the kitchen just to prepare your sandwich and packed lunch for school!

Our mothers do all of these big and small things and even if we take them for granted, we always feel loved by them because they say and show it to us—every time. It is this amazing thoughtfulness that proves how really special children are to their parents.

Her wonderful way with words. Despite how kids could be so stubborn, mothers have a way with words that makes their children clasp their hands and obey. Call it lies, hypnosis or sugar-coating, but whatever it is, only mothers can make kids obey and understand at the same time.

Her "everything's-gonna-be-okay" air. Well, it's no air actually. Mothers have this amazing power to make everything all right—when it comes to their kids, at least. When problems pour, head for mommy because she knows what to do and she can make anything definitely better. With a hug, a smile, a couple of smooth sentences or even a handful of candies—there is nothing a mother can't make better and for this we're all smiles.

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com

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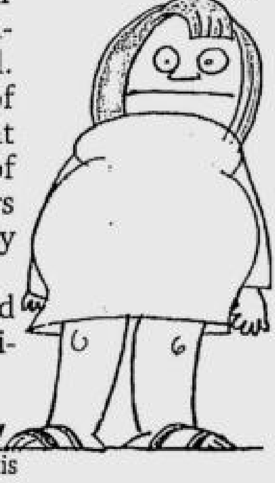
A TOAST TO MOMS

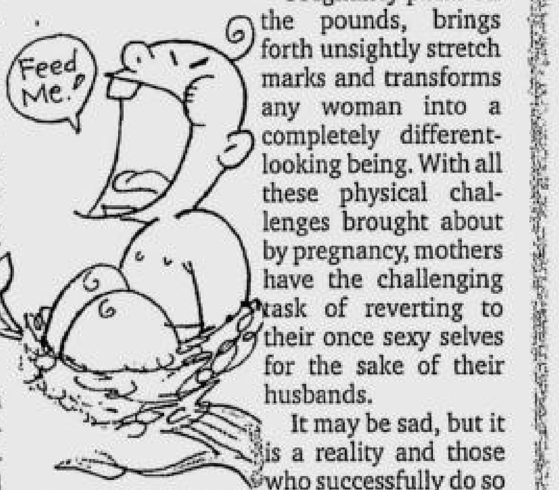
WE are so used to our mothers' thoughtfulness and caring that we sometimes forget how really amazing they are. Many times we neglect the sacrifices they make and forget that their love for us is truly unconditional. Here are some of the things that will remind us of how our mothers deserve hourly thank-yous, hugs, kisses and even a gift certificate to a spa.



Bowling ball belly

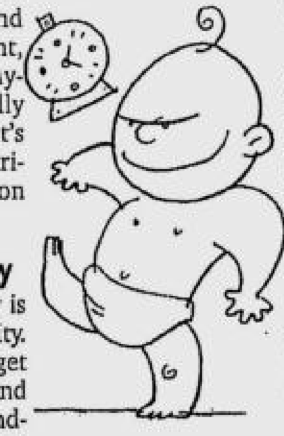
Being pregnant is no joke. Aside from the big belly, which elicits giggles from kids (and even adults), there are the physical discomforts to put up with.

A mother endures nausea, morning sickness (and afternoon and evening, too), and body aches. The distress definitely doesn't stop after the bundle of joy starts to scream inside the delivery room.



Pains of giving birth

The anesthesia may lessen the physical agony during delivery, but there's still some excruciating pain there, as proven by the expressive faces of movie moms in delivery rooms. Giving birth may be a magical and miraculous moment, but there's no denying that physically for most moms, it's one hell of an experience, emphasis on hell.



Feeding the baby

Feeding the baby is a big responsibility. Making sure kids get the right amount and kind of food is a mind-boggling task (think of all the baby food variants out there), and it's sometimes physically exhausting, too (oh, to mash bananas with fork!).

Feeding may sound as simple as directing a spoon into baby's mouth, but every mother knows that wisdom, gentleness and patience are greatly needed when feeding a toddler. And we're not even tackling breastfeeding emergencies that happen inside jeepneys.

Sleepless nights

Babies have weird, unpredictable, ever-changing and annoying sleeping habits. Worst of all, it's such a predicament sending them to la-la land, plus they bawl all the time. Mothers are incredibly amazing individuals who always make sure their kids get enough rest and they're safe. It's okay for them to lack sleep as long as their kids get enough.

Maintaining good figure

Pregnancy packs on the pounds, brings forth unsightly stretch marks and transforms any woman into a completely different-looking being. With all these physical challenges brought about by pregnancy, mothers have the challenging task of reverting to their once sexy selves for the sake of their husbands.

It may be sad, but it is a reality and those who successfully do so (for their husbands or for themselves) deserve perpetual pats on the back.

Selfless life

When a woman becomes a mother, it is the start of a totally new life for her. She begins to lose time for herself and focuses more on the other people in her life.

Life as a single is forever lost and new responsibilities as wife and mother surface.

Niño Mark M. Sablan

ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

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To the one who always turns up first
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even now that you are so far away,
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LIFESTYLE

Love letters to Mom

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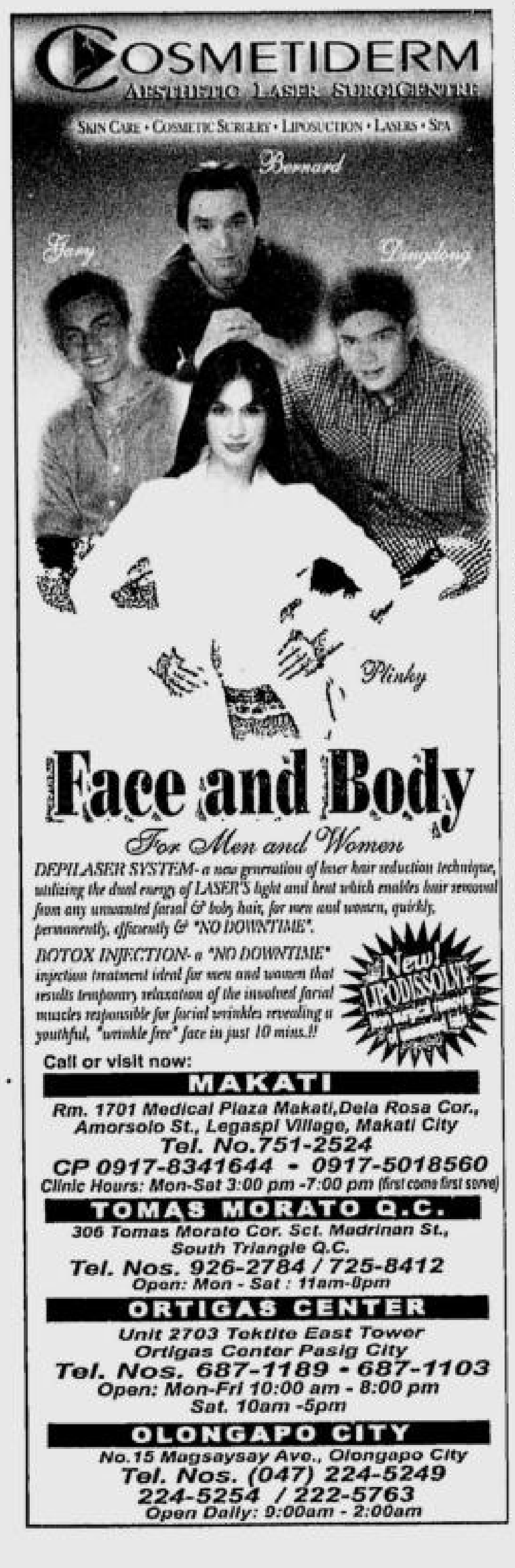
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Unspoken promise between a daughter and her mom

'I disappeared in India for days with no way of reaching you . . . And you found me, because you always do'

DEAR Ma,

I'm sure that when I was born, you came out of your anaesthesia-induced sleep, cradled me in your arms for the first time, looked at me and thought, "She's perfect." You thought I was perfect, even if I was overweight, had scary hair and looked like a troll.

You were just 21 then, full of dreams for your perfect little darling.

But I grew up to be far from perfect.

When I was 5 and you were so bent on making me practice my cursive so my handwriting would be beautiful like yours, I used to hide my workbook behind our TV set so you wouldn't be able to make me sit for hours to write.

I refused to let my baby brother kiss me because he liked slobbering all over my cheeks.

You loved buying me clothes but I hated trying them on. Trips to the mall were never complete without arguments that usually ended with me sulking in the fitting room, grudgingly trying on clothes that made me itch.

When I entered grade school, I still hated writing and refused to copy the notes off the blackboard. You almost always had to borrow notes from my more industrious classmates. I can still see you standing at Gate 5, frantically copying Joyce's neat and complete notes which you made me rewrite in my own notebook at home.

While I did not like writing in notebooks, I, like most of my other classmates, enjoyed writing on myself. I'd come home from school with doodles of hearts and smiley faces on my hands, arms and legs. This never failed to infuriate you.

When I was 8 and stupid, I ate an entire pint of rocky road ice cream and developed an allergy. My face got all red and swollen, I thought it was going to explode. You rushed me to the hospital in the middle of the night and tried to calm me down because I was bawling my head off.

You also did what you could to calm me down whenever I had to go for shots. I must have inherited your almost nonexistent threshold for pain because I used to pound my head against the walls right outside the doctor's clinic while my brother flailed around and broke bottles inside before getting injections. I hate needles that much.

Exams week was hell not just for me. You would type up reviewers based on my notes and then find me doodling pineapples (and ugly ones, at that) all over them instead of reading them. I remember the time you made me stay in my room to study but caught me reading Archie comics instead.

Remember when I failed fourth grade art? Instead of being mad, you had a discussion with the teacher who accused me of not doing the projects you saw me slaving over at home. I hated myself then, not because I failed but because I feared that I disappointed you.

I tried to get out of going to class countless times. I feigned headaches and stomachaches in the car on our way to school that would miraculously disappear the moment you brought me home again.

I made my brother believe that his rubberized horse bracelet had magic powers and can make all his wishes come true. Up to this day, he hasn't gotten over his unfulfilled dreams.

Whenever we would eat Cracker Nuts, I'd only eat the outer shell and made you eat all the peanuts. And you did, even if they were shiny with my saliva.

I remember the countless brawls I had with my brother Powie, which usually ended with all of us in tears. The worst was a fight about Play-Doh, which resulted in us trying to stab each other with pencils.

I lost countless pieces of jewelry—tokens of love from you. I must have made a few plumbers happy.

When I was in high school and you allowed me to go to the mall with my classmates as long as my *yaya* would follow us around, I gave her money to watch a movie so my friends and I could have time alone.

You were with me when I first enrolled in my university. But they refused to let parents into the buildings and you ended up staying in the car all day under the heat of the sun while I braved the countless queues.

You were wary when I started dating in college. But you refused to stifle me so you allowed me to make my decisions, even when you thought I was dating the wrong guys. You were always reminding me to be cautious and, more importantly, you were there for me when things ended.

You don't like it when I have to go on trips but you've come to understand that that's part of my job. There was that time I disappeared in India for days and had no way of reaching you. You must have gone crazy calling people up, trying to reach me. And you found me, because you always do.

You've had to deal with a lot of phone calls from ex-boyfriends who sniffle and wail and tell you how heartless I've been.

And yet, despite all these, I see you watching me sometimes and I think that your weary eyes still look at me with the same amount of adoration you did the day I was born 22 years ago.

Because that day we met, the first time you carried all 8.11 pounds of me, we made an unspoken promise. A promise that surpasses everything—ball-point pen tattoos, lost jewelry, failed subjects and all.

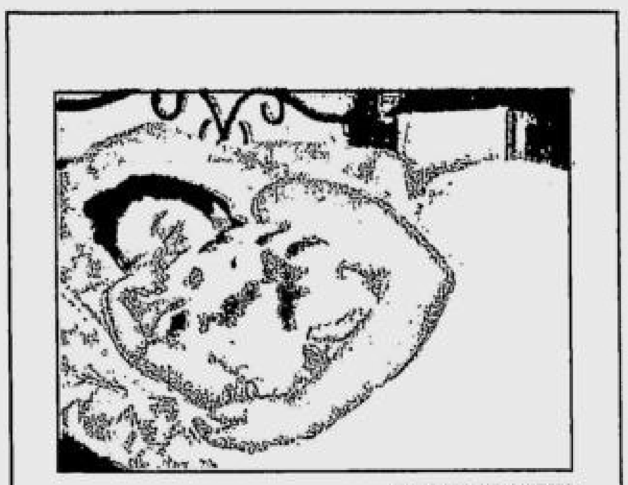
You have never failed to make me feel your love. Like when you pick me up from work in the dead of the night. Or when I'm asleep and I feel you smother my face with kisses like you probably did when I was a baby. Or when you cook garlic chicken for me. Or make my phone ring to look for me when I'm out with friends.

The past few months have been very tumultuous. It's a relief to be picking up the pieces with you again.

I love you, Ma.

Your troll,

Pam



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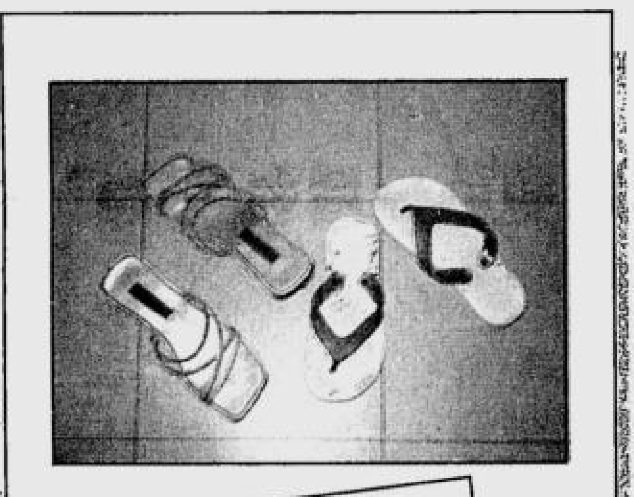

Mom's 19-year-old 'headache' isn't about to fade away yet

'One day I will be like you. Until then, know that whenever I slam the door in your face, I want you to open it'

Dear Mom,

Looky, looky...19 years have passed and I'm still here! That's quite an accomplishment, although I could have turned into a brat who has a tantrum when she doesn't get her way (although, come to think of it, I still am that way).

There are so many things that have yet to be said, along with many "Ys, I know you told me so" (such as brushing my teeth after every meal and filling out my OJT forms). There are also a bunch of "sorry's" and "thank you's" to be said.

I'm sorry for constantly being the poster child of teenage angst and narcissism, and thank you for bearing with me. I know the huge generation gap is one factor why we never seem to understand each other.

I know that we're both growing, yet it frustrates us so much that we always seem to be on opposite ends—my attention span is as short as the next teenager's, and you're beginning to forget things you've said and done.

I'm sorry for always knocking on your door in the wee hours of the morning because of my insomnia, and thank you for sitting beside my bed every time, even though it irritates you that I can never seem to shut my trap even at 3 a.m.

I know you end up without sleep but still have to keep a busy schedule while I have the luxury of either sleeping in on weekends or sleeping through my photography class the next day.

I'm sorry to have you listen to my ranting while we are on the road and thank you for not jumping out of the car whenever I do so. Yes, I know road rage is bad and it hurts you so much to hear so many negative things from me. I know you constantly pray for me to heal and open my eyes to everything beautiful in this world.

I'm sorry that I've hurt you so many times... and thank you for not packing me in a box and shipping me off to Nicaragua. I know I'm a horrible person... and you seem to be one of the only two people in this planet who think otherwise.

I know most of my actions are uncalled for, that I say things that hurt you. I can't recall the number of times you've asked me again and again what my plans for the day are.

I'm sorry that, unlike you, I have not mastered loving unconditionally... and I thank you for constantly showing me how.

Patiently waiting hours for me to finish my laser tag games, staying up late at night waiting for me to show my face at your door, and spending money on things that you know would make me happy only for a short time. Scrapping your schedule for the day and lending me your driver so I won't have to drive myself, walking back and forth a huge mall although your feet are already killing you so I can find the perfect pair of jeans, and coping with the fear that something bad has happened to me when I'm not home by curfew.

Raising me has not been easy. I'm difficult to get along with and have too many hangups. I have put up too many walls that are hard to tear down. I'm too numb.

A 'little angel' dreams of reuniting with her mom

'I loved him, you didn't. But you loved me. And so you stood there and watched me waste my life away'

DEAR Mom,

It's been 10 years since we've spoken to each other. As I stare outside my window and watch people walk down the street, I try to imagine how many of them have the same relationship we have. After all, don't people see that on my face whenever they see me walking down the street?

I always go back to the time when would while away the summer days by making *gulaman*, which we sold at the village street corner, hoping to attract little children who went to the park to play accompanied by their *yayas*. How can I forget the many times I spilled the red liquid on the ground, and forgot to charge people P10? Summer nights were spent telling stories. While everyone else was watching TV and playing with their Game and Watch, we would marvel over tales of enchanted trees full of fairies, and ghosts that stayed up at night waiting to eat little children.

It didn't matter that daddy was never around. That he left us. Because it was always you and me anyway. You and me against the world.

It was not long ago when you held me in your arms until I fell asleep. Not long ago when you called me your "little angel," the one who always seemed to chase your troubles away. But it seemed as if I was the only one who brought you so much pain and suffering.

The days when we would spend time together in the garden stopped. We hardly talked anymore. You became so busy with your nightly mahjong. And I spent time with Wally.

I know you never really approved of Wally. He was everything you didn't like for he never picked me up at the front door whenever we went on dates and he always seemed to cuss at everything and forget his table manners at home. I loved him, you didn't. But you loved me. And so you stood there and watched me waste my life away because I was too stubborn to listen to you. To believe you. That this would all end the way it ended for you.

Cebu is beautiful, Mom. I wish you would come and visit us some time... me and your granddaughter, Linda Marie. She loves the beach just as much as I used to. Remember when you would take me to the beach? Every summer she gets really tanned because she hates the icky feeling of sun block.

And like me, she doesn't care that Wally is not around. She understands that we have to stick together, just like you and I had to.

I hope you can fly over and celebrate Mother's Day with us since I don't know where you live anymore. A friend has told me that you would probably be able to get in touch with me through this letter. I miss you and I love you.

Your little angel,

Clara

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A son remembers the day his mom put him in a sack

DEAR Ma,

I know you hated it when I gelled my hair to stand on its end, so I won't let you see me like that again. And I know you hate it when I entertain the idea of coloring my hair so I won't do that for now. You like it short and neat, and I think such style suits me best.

I'm talking about my hair because we don't really have much drama to deal with, and I like it that way. My childhood was too dramatic, though, when you ordered me to get inside a sack because you caught me playing outside instead of studying. And even if I bawled my eyes out, you stood your ground and told me you planned on throwing out the sack (with me inside) in the middle of the street. And while Ate and our *yaya* stood on one side begging for my life with tears and all, I began to imagine if it was a car or jeepney that would run over me. But, of course, none of that happened. I seriously think it was your idea of a joke although I didn't find it funny at that time.

> 'I talk about my hair because we don't really have much drama to deal with, and I like it that way'

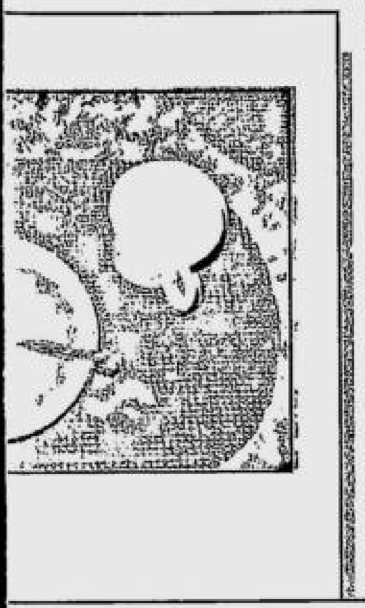
I laugh about it now, by the way.

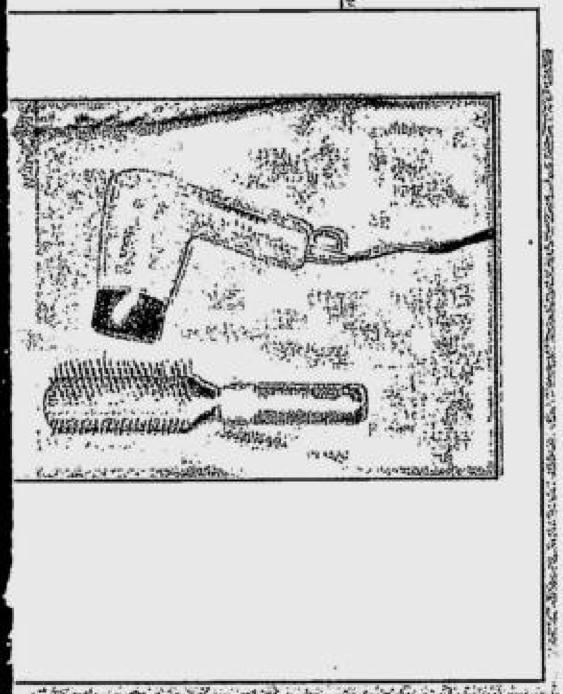
And yes, I'll try to clean the entire house again, but not this Sunday. At least not while the summer weather is this harsh. And also I won't tease you when you get teary-eyed watching certain TV shows/movies. After all, you didn't tease me when we both cried watching "The Bridges of Madison County." I won't complain when you prepare *buko* shake instead of my favorite, banana-mango. I might even drink it. And I know you want me to sleep at an earlier time. I'll see about that.

If I fail to fulfill any of these promises, feel free to bring out the sack and let's re-live that memory from long ago.

I love you,

Jason





But you've been with me all the way. I assure you that one day, I will learn to be hum-
e, to look at the positive things in life, and to
ve the way you do.

You are the strongest woman I know
crew Buffy, she never had me as a daugh-
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u are—someone who can leap over obsta-
es in life, always looking for a cloud's silver
ing, never giving up even when there is a
ge STOP sign.

One day I will be like you. Until then, know
at whenever I slam the door in your face, I
ant you to open it.

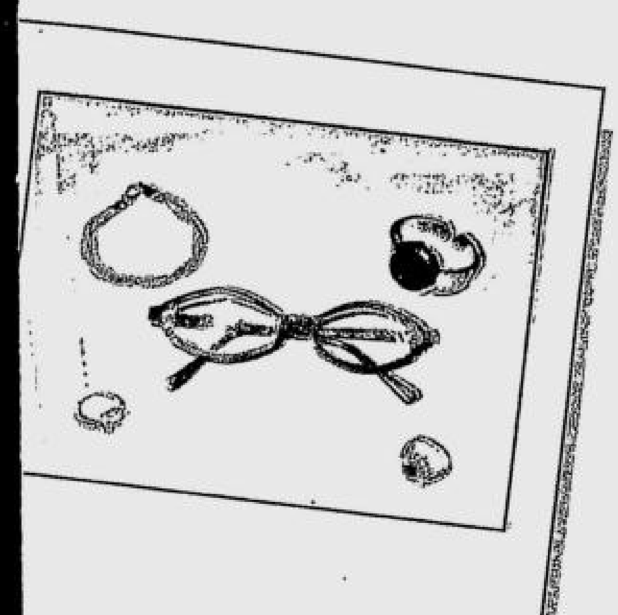
I love you, Mom. Here's to more fights, ar-
uments, screaming fits and immature whin-
g to come.

But oh, looky, looky, it's been 19 years and
e're still alive!

Your youngest,

Nani

P.S. Be assured that I will always find a way
get in touch with you whenever I get in-
mnia attacks.



MARCH 2003

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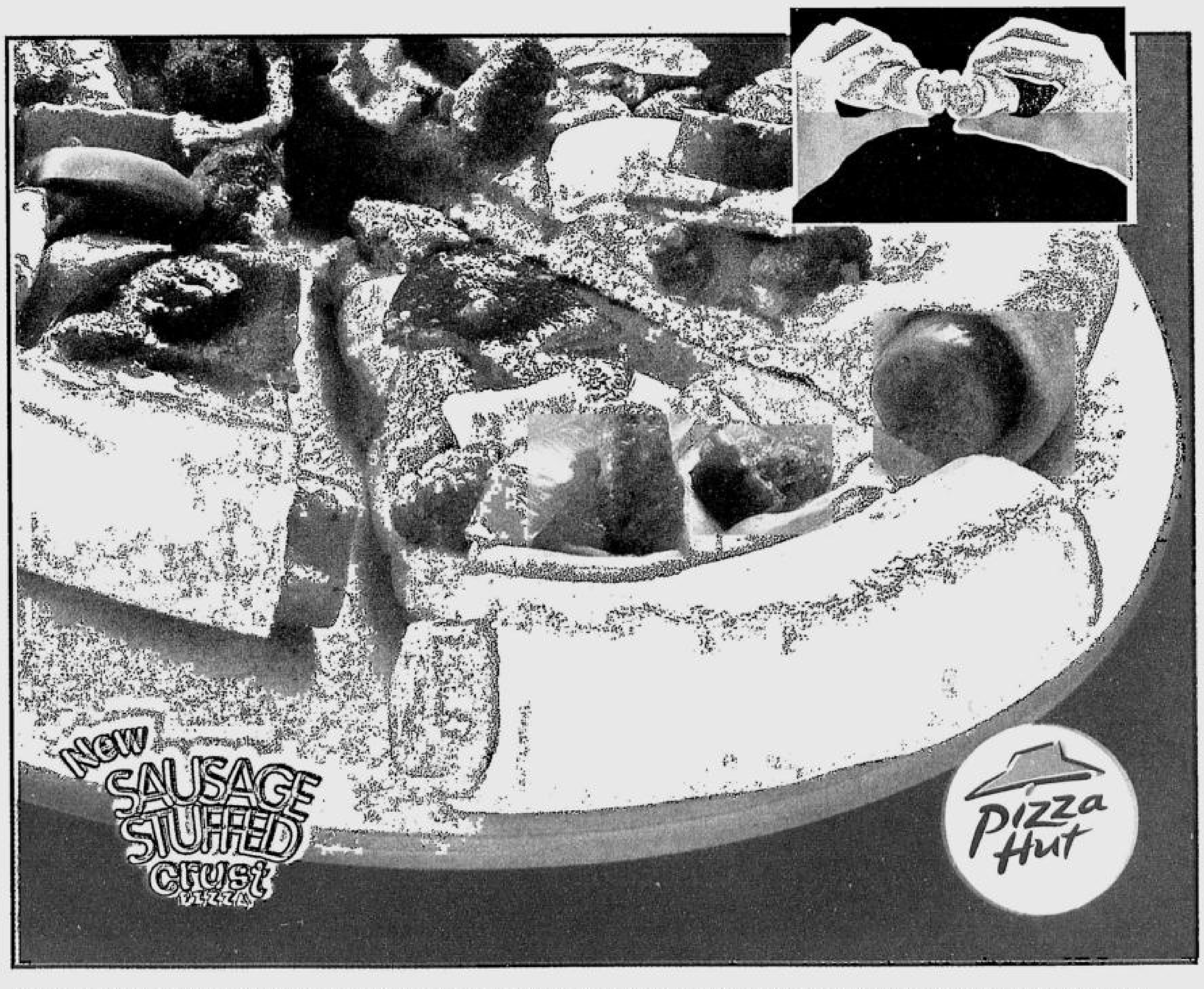
Story on page A2

News hot off the grill!
DAILY PIZZA TRIBUNE

Man weds pizza in Vegas ceremony.
Story on Page A5

THREE-FOOT LONG SAUSAGE STUFFED INTO THE CRUST!



LONGEST SAUSAGE EVER FOUND IN A PIZZA. Sausage experts from around the world are trying to determine how this massive sausage fit into Pizza Hut's pizza.

A three-foot sausage was found stuffed inside the crust of a Pizza Hut pizza by a customer this morning. The man could barely contain his excitement as he tried to describe what happened.

"I bit into the crust and my mouth was filled with sausage!"

The man claims his life has been changed, and wants to help others share the same experience.

The Sausage Stuffed Crust Pizza is causing a sensation throughout the Philippines and the world. People are flocking to Pizza Hut restaurants to catch a glimpse of it, and hopefully, sink their teeth into it.

How such a marvel of pizza engineering was achieved continues to baffle people. Pizza Hut has remained tight-lipped about its meaty master-piece. A company representative, speaking on conditions of anonymity said, "I can't tell you how we did it, but let's just say, when we stuff something, we put our heart and soul into it."

Another employee, beaming with pride, said "mankind built the pyramids, split the atom, landed on the moon, and now he's managed to stuff a three-foot long sausage into a pizza crust. That's the stuff of legends!"

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What will they think of next?

---

* 3-foot sausage applies to family size pizza

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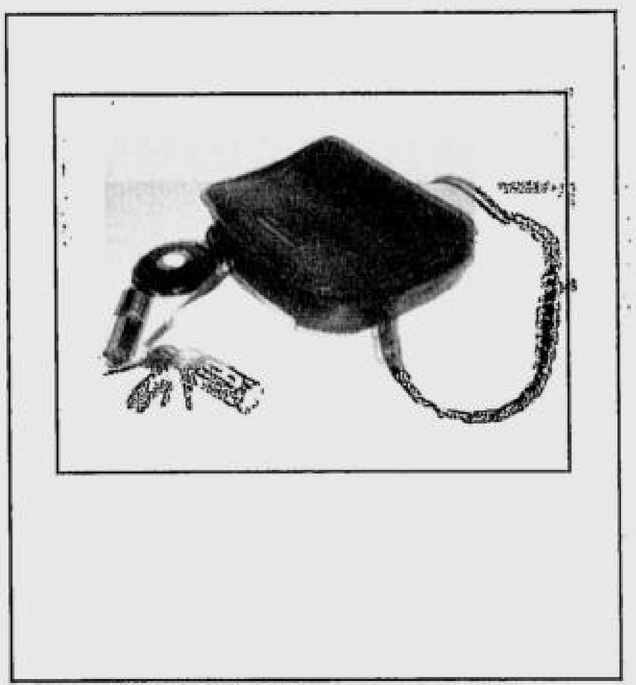

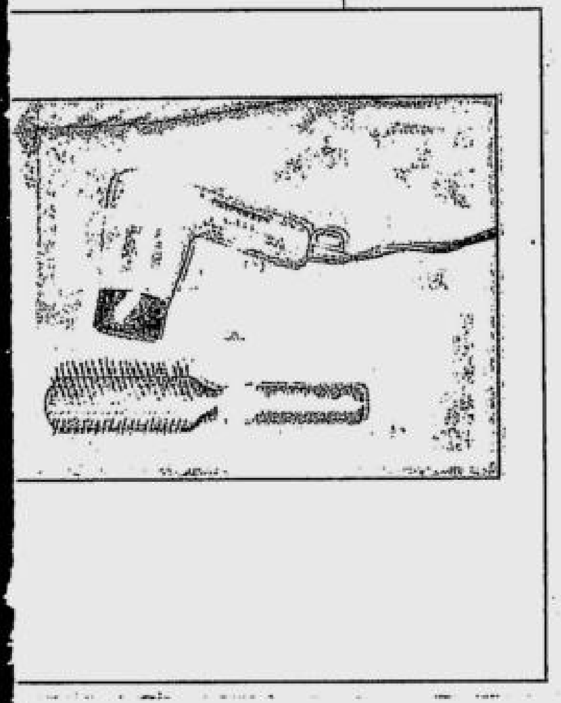

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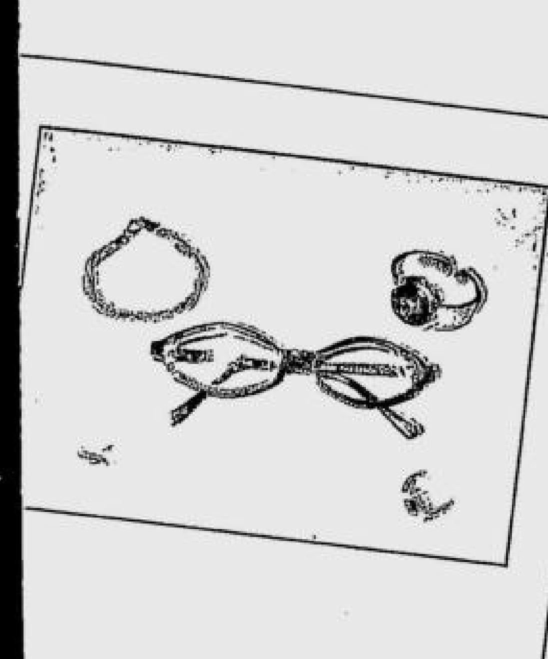

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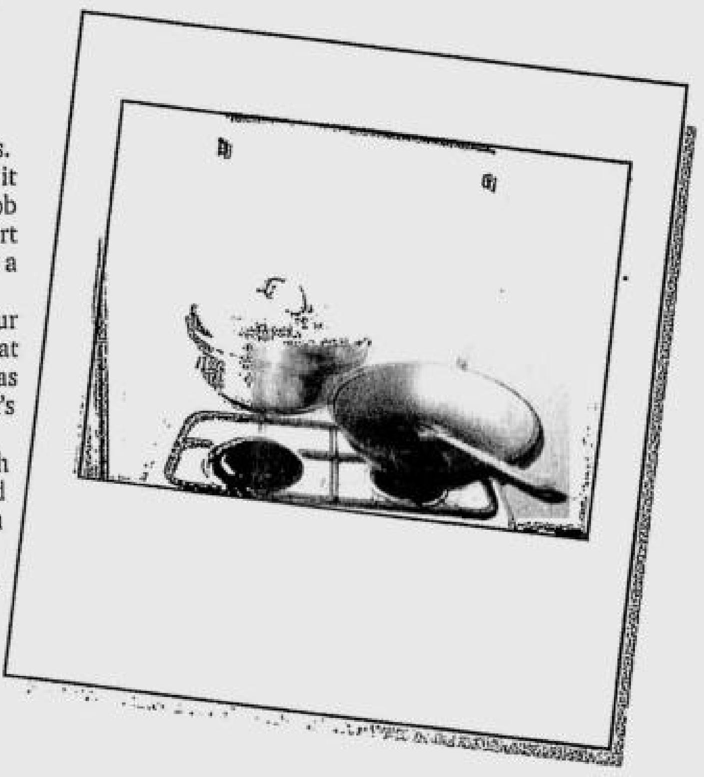
From an absentee son



Dear Ma,

Haven't seen you for quite some time. The last time I heard your voice was over the phone, when you were asking me if I already had lunch, because you were planning to send me some food. As usual, I was in such a rush, on my way to my daily frenetic pace of activities that I put the phone down without realizing you were still chatting away.

This was not the last time I put you out of my priority list. Grownup children (well, at least we think we are) have a way of putting their parents aside, not realizing that, oftentimes, you are our only true allies.

We always complain about absentee parents, looking at our elders' faults to fill up the void that we have created ourselves. As we grow older, instead of building bridges, we choose to build walls, thinking that this would protect us from harm.

The true harm is when we isolate ourselves from the ones we love. It is too easy to find ourselves lost in the whirlwind of momentary happiness.

I look at my life and at the relationships that have gone by. Sometimes, I blame you for faults that I have committed. Is it by virtue of history repeating itself? But when I look at you as an example of how it is to love, I sense nothing wrong in giving, because you showed me how it is to be selfless.

Your heart had space for seven of us. Even during moments when nobody felt like showing any love, you would reach out in your own way. You drew strength from your prayers. The things you could not change you lifted up to your God. I would often see you suffer in silence as sometimes things do not go our way.

Everybody pictures a perfect family but I am proud of the fact that despite ours not being the most ideal, you held on to that image and became the pillar of strength for all of us.

I feel sad every time I see my sisters take it out on your motherhood. You did the best job you could and I saw the gargantuan effort that you exerted not only as a mother but as a wife as well.

Even now, as you live your life without your kids beside you, but with dad around, I look at the both of you and see a couple who has stood the test of time and really, you know it's all because of your unconditional love.

Through hurt and pain, through heartaches, menopause and now, in your old age, you have always worked hard. And you did it not for yourself but for us.

And I thank you for that. I love you, Mom.

Brian

Daughter finds security in mother's love

'God was really perfect in giving you to me as my mother'

Dearest Mom,

I know nobody's perfect, only God. Yes, and He has been really perfect in giving you to me as my mother. I thank Him for all the times He let us share together, times that could have been just ordinary but have turned to be special because they were shared with you.

Thank you for being there for me and with me, even in my lowest moments. I believe that I'll never feel so alone, because you are with me. Nothing feels as peaceful and as secure as the feeling your motherly touch and your sweet embrace give.

You are not only a mother to me. You are my mentor, my lifeguard and my best friend. You are everything to me.

You were there when I was a baby, waking up in the middle of your sleep to make sure I'm all right and I know you will still be there to help me in the days to come.

God made you the most important person in my life. He knows that you will love me and you will take good care of me. He knows that you help Him in molding me into a better person.

Mom, you are the main reason I continue living, dreaming and trying to make my dreams come true.

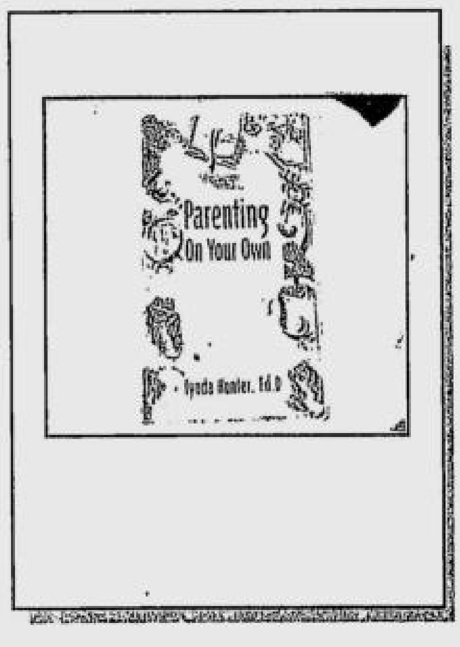
I love you so much. I want to be the one to take care of you when you grow old. There are still so many things I want to share with you. I want to be there for you like you've been there for me.

Mom, I may have hurt you a lot of times, knowingly or unknowingly and I'm sorry. I pray that God would enlighten me so that I may realize the depth of your love and the greatness of the sacrifices you have done for me.

Thanks for everything, Mom.
I love you very much.
Happy mothers' day.

Your daughter,

Vanna



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   hal. "reg Johnny Reyes 1902 New York St., Cubao" at i-text sa 2292.
2. Mag-Celle-babad. Tumawag (₱6.50 /min. cell to cell and cell to local landline, ₱9.50 /min. NDD, $0.40 /min. IDD), Mag-Voice Message (₱3.00 /min.), Voice Info (₱3.00 /min.) at Karaoke (₱2.50 /min.). Every 1 minute on your TouchMobile is equivalent to 1 electronic raffle entry.
   Kaya: 2 min. calls = 2 electronic raffle entries; 3 min. calls = 3 electronic raffle entries.
3. Touch Mobile Celle-babad Raffle Promo is from April 21 to June 15, 2003

The more you Celle-babad on your Touch Mobile, baka ang dream house mo, mapasa-iyo!

See flyers for more details.

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STA. CATALINA VILLAGE

Our four letters make a home
ALPHI

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Gift guide

By Maui Reyes and Pam Pastor

ALL moms are different, we don't have to tell you that. An essential in buying your Mother's Day gift is knowing the kind of mom you have.

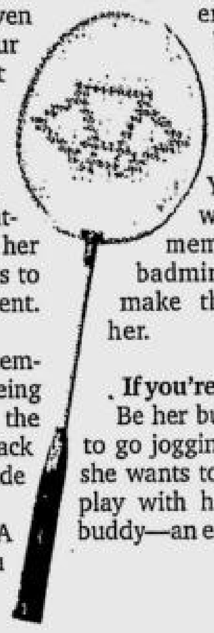
We tried to make things a bit easier for you by listing down ideas that can help you in your quest for the perfect gift.

In the end, it's not the amount you spent, it's the effort you exerted in finding the perfect surprise for your beloved mother.

Happy gift-hunting!

If your mom is...

Sporty spice



SHE can climb flights of stairs without running out of breath. She has more pairs of rubber shoes than you do. She even enjoys jogging around your village. Your mom doesn't mind getting sweaty. In fact, she thrives on it.

If you're loaded:

Gym membership. You know your mom's been wanting to hit the gym. Make her happy by getting her access to the latest exercise equipment. She'll love you for it.

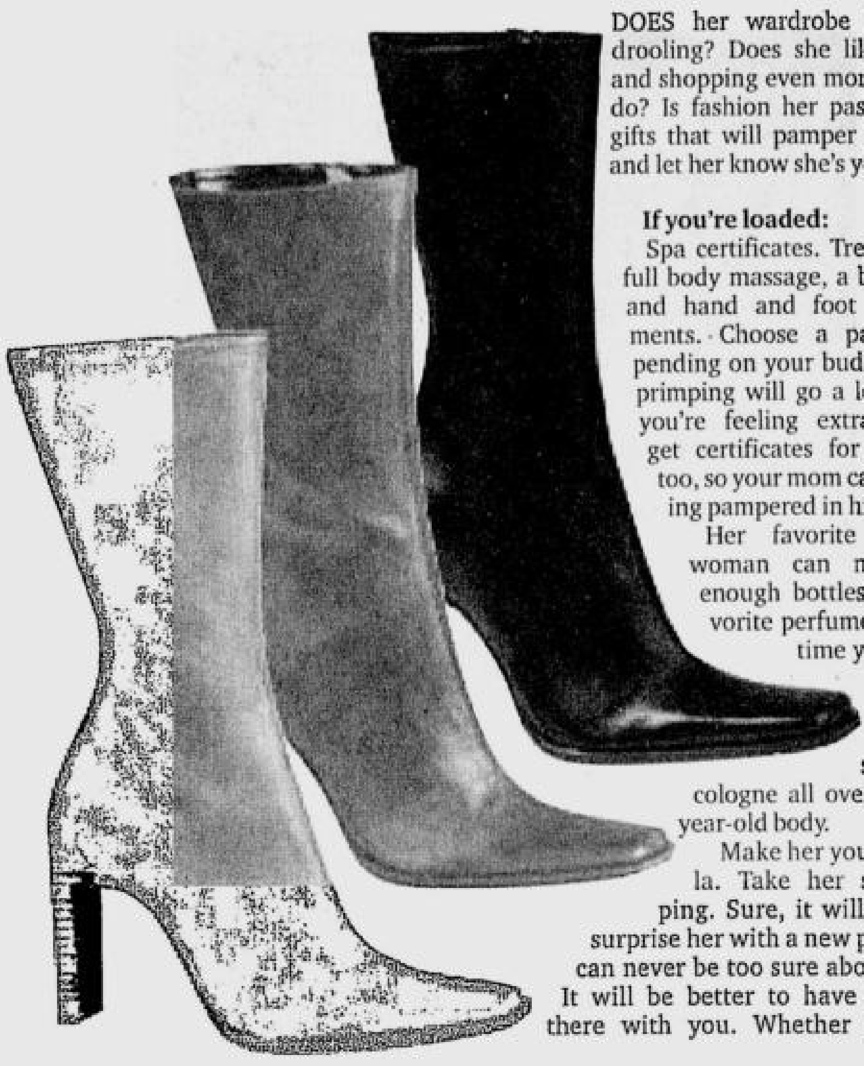
New rubber shoes. Remember the new pair she was eyeing the last time you visited the sports store? Take her back there and let her decide which pair she wants.

A badminton racket. A nice one, not the kind you can buy from the toy department. Let your mom rediscover the joys of badminton. Everyone's so into badminton these days that getting a court reserved is close to impossible. You might also want to get her a membership to a badminton club to make things easier for her.

If you're cash-strapped:

Be her buddy. If she wants to go jogging, go with her. If she wants to play badminton, play with her. Be her sports buddy—an enthusiastic one.

A beauty queen



DOES her wardrobe leave you drooling? Does she like makeup and shopping even more than you do? Is fashion her passion? Give gifts that will pamper your mom and let her know she's your queen.

If you're loaded:

Spa certificates. Treat her to a full body massage, a body scrub, and hand and foot spa treatments. Choose a package depending on your budget. A little primping will go a long way. If you're feeling extra-generous, get certificates for your dad, too, so your mom can enjoy being pampered in his company.

Her favorite scent. A woman can never have enough bottles of her favorite perfume. It's about time you paid her back for all those times you sprayed her cologne all over your five-year-old body.

Make her your Cinderella. Take her shoe shopping. Sure, it will be nice to surprise her with a new pair but you can never be too sure about the size. It will be better to have your mom there with you. Whether your mom wants boots or sexy strappy sandals, you're definitely going to make her and her feet very happy.

Take her shopping. Bring her to her favorite store, ask her to pick out what she wants and be the one to pay for them. It's about time you returned the favor. After all, she's done the same for you in countless toy stores.

If you're cash-strapped:

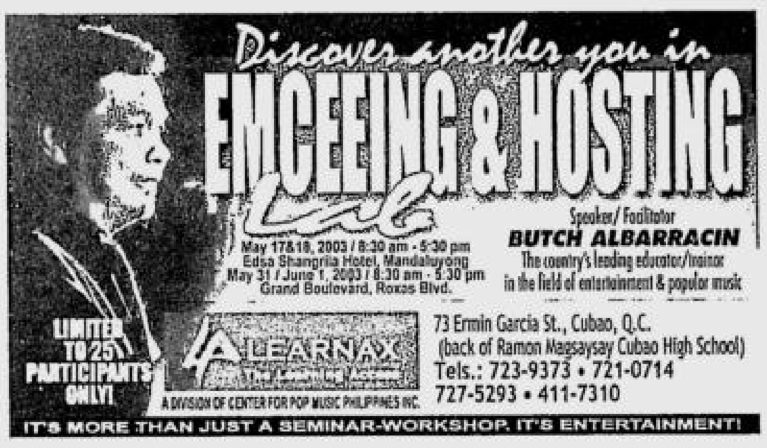
Turn your mom's room into a spa. Bring out your lotion and body scrubs and give mom an afternoon to remember. Create your own spa treatment process. Give her a long massage. Who cares if you're not a skilled masseuse? What matters to mom is that your loving hands are carefully kneading all her aches away.

Sew a nice little bag for her makeup. If you aced your sewing class, now's your chance to show off your skills with the needle and thread. Create a nice little makeup kit for mom, one that she can slide into her purse and carry with her everywhere.

Make her new accessories. Contrary to what you think, raw materials for accessories are not at all expensive. Hit Divisoria and Quiapo, or even little crafts stores and buy beads, pendants, chains and locks. Surf the Net and look at magazines for inspiration. Then let your creativity take over.

GIFT/E2

Is your mom a beauty queen? An athlete? A techie freak? An entertainment expert? A housewife? A workaholic? No worries, we've got ideas to help you make your superwoman happy



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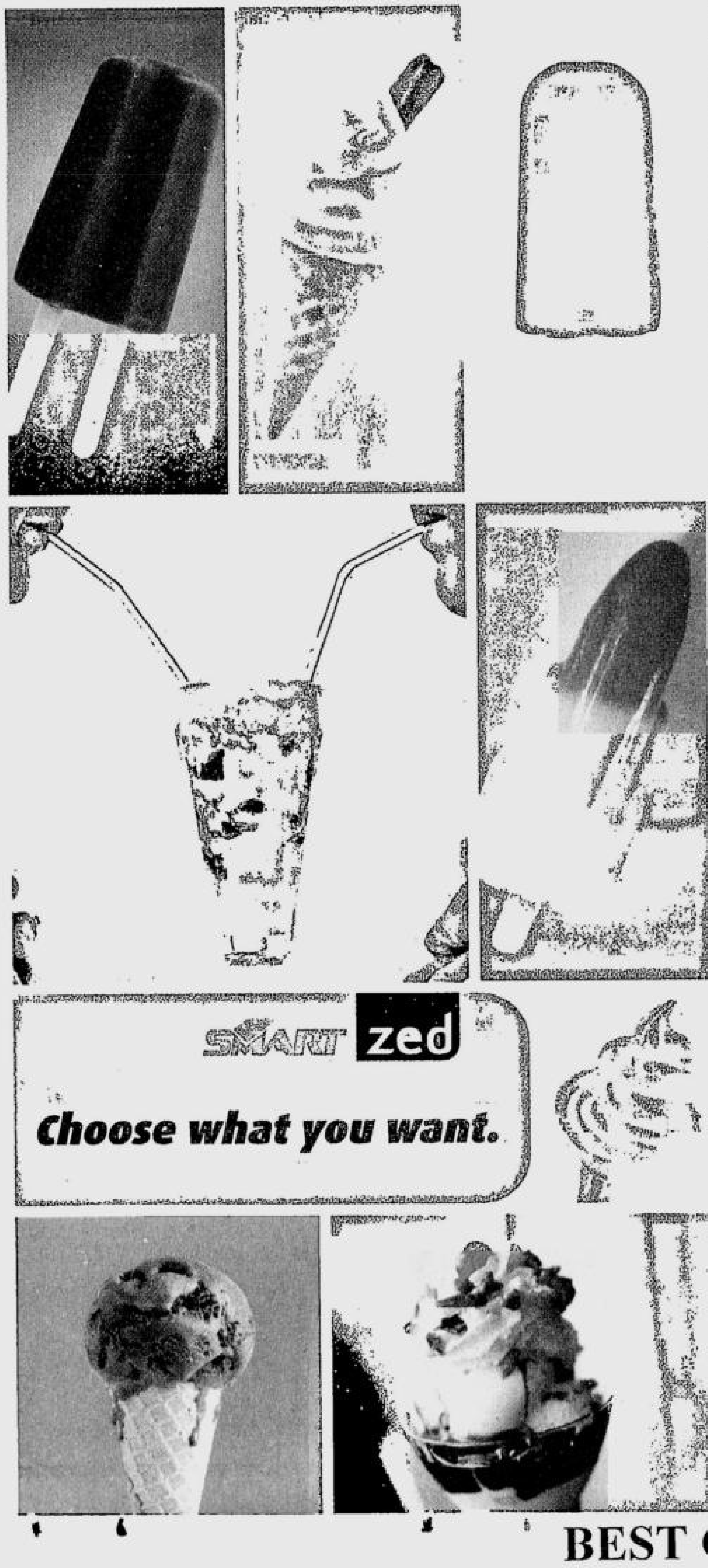

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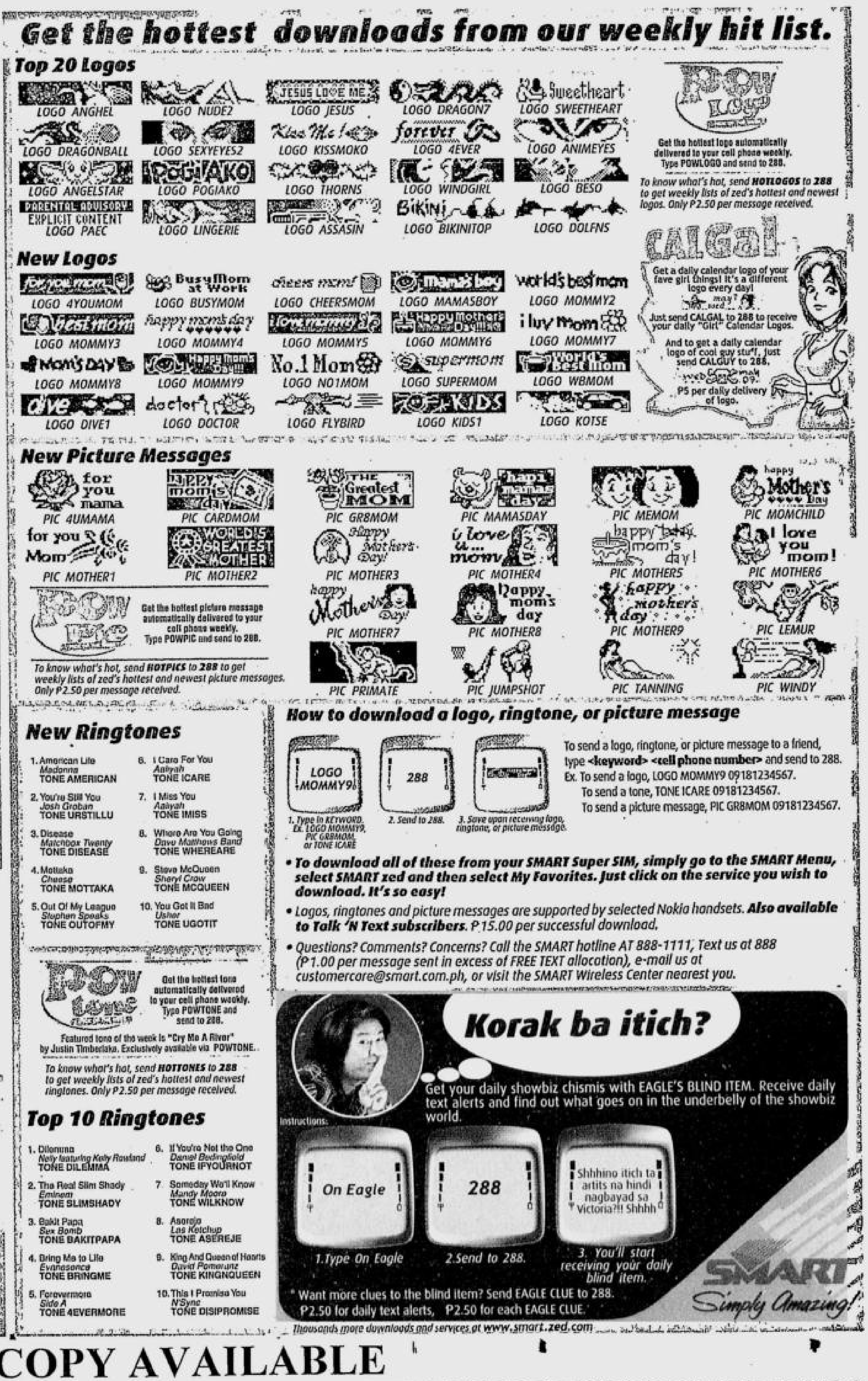
Choose what you want.



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LOGO MOMMY8 · LOGO MOMMY9 · LOGO NO1MOM · LOGO SUPERMOM · LOGO WBMOM
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Get a daily calendar logo of your fave girl things! It's a different logo every day!
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POW PIC
Get the hottest picture message automatically delivered to your cell phone weekly. Type POWPIC and send to 288.
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New Ringtones
1. American Life / Madonna / TONE AMERICAN
2. You're Still You / Josh Groban / TONE URSTILLU
3. Disease / Matchbox Twenty / TONE DISEASE
4. Mottaka / Cheese / TONE MOTTAKA
5. Out Of My League / Stephen Speaks / TONE OUTOFMY
6. I Care For You / Aaliyah / TONE ICARE
7. I Miss You / Aaliyah / TONE IMISS
8. Where Are You Going / Dave Matthews Band / TONE WHEREARE
9. Steve McQueen / Sheryl Crow / TONE MCQUEEN
10. You Got It Bad / Usher / TONE UGOTIT

POW tone
Get the hottest tone automatically delivered to your cell phone weekly. Type POWTONE and send to 288.
Featured tone of the week is "Cry Me A River" by Justin Timberlake. Exclusively available via POWTONE.
To know what's hot, send HOTTONES to 288 to get weekly lists of zed's hottest and newest ringtones. Only P2.50 per message received.

Top 10 Ringtones
1. Dilemma / Nelly featuring Kelly Rowland / TONE DILEMMA
2. The Real Slim Shady / Eminem / TONE SLIMSHADY
3. Bakit Papa / Sex Bomb / TONE BAKITPAPA
4. Bring Me to Life / Evanescence / TONE BRINGME
5. Forevermore / Side A / TONE 4EVERMORE
6. If You're Not the One / Daniel Bedingfield / TONE IFYOURNOT
7. Someday We'll Know / Mandy Moore / TONE WILKNOW
8. Asereje / Las Ketchup / TONE ASEREJE
9. King And Queen of Hearts / David Pomeranz / TONE KINGNQUEEN
10. This I Promise You / N'Sync / TONE DISIPROMISE

How to download a logo, ringtone, or picture message
LOGO MOMMY9 · 288
1. Type in KEYWORD. Ex. LOGO MOMMY9, PIC GR8MOM, or TONE ICARE
2. Send to 288.
3. Save upon receiving logo, ringtone, or picture message.
To send a logo, ringtone, or picture message to a friend, type <keyword> <cell phone number> and send to 288.
Ex. To send a logo, LOGO MOMMY9 09181234567.
To send a tone, TONE ICARE 09181234567.
To send a picture message, PIC GR8MOM 09181234567.
• To download all of these from your SMART Super SIM, simply go to the SMART Menu, select SMART zed and then select My Favorites. Just click on the service you wish to download. It's so easy!
• Logos, ringtones and picture messages are supported by selected Nokia handsets. Also available to Talk 'N Text subscribers. P15.00 per successful download.
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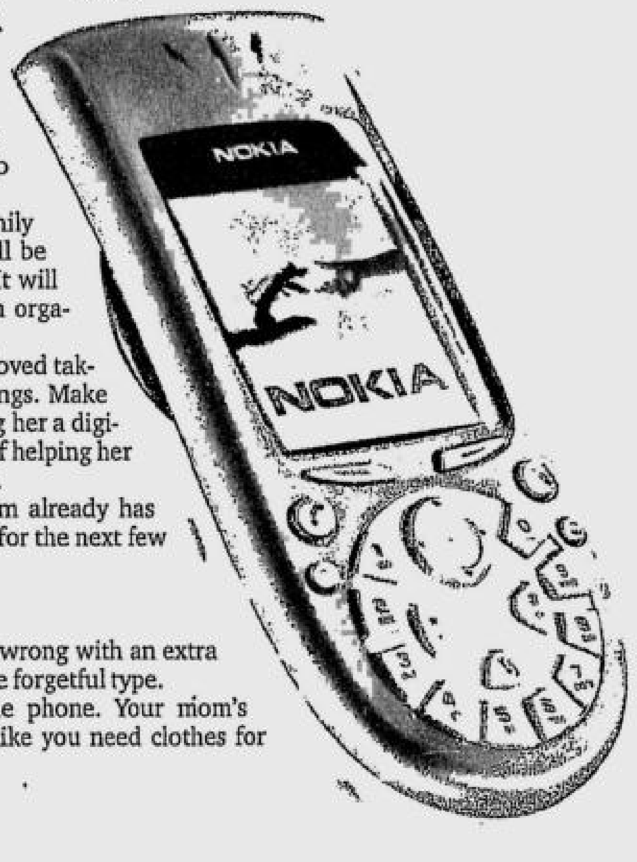
A techie freak



If you're loaded:

A new phone. Come on. You know she deserves it. After all, she did wear the last one out trying to find you during your nights out.

A PDA. She juggles work, family and her personal life. Surely, she'll be able to give that PDA a workout. It will be your way of helping your mom organize her hectic life.

A digicam. Your mom's always loved taking pictures of you and your siblings. Make things a bit easier on her by getting her a digital camera. That will be your way of helping her scrimp on film and processing fees.

Internet access. Or if your mom already has one, offer to pay her Internet bills for the next few months.

If you're cash-strapped:

A new stylus. You can never go wrong with an extra stylus, especially if your mom is the forgetful type.

A case for her PDA or mobile phone. Your mom's beloved gadgets need cases just like you need clothes for protection.

An entertainment expert

FORGET buying a copy of Entertainment Weekly. Your mom seems to know the latest scoop on your fave celeb even before it happens! She's got her finger on the pulse on anything music, movie, and celeb-related that she ought to have her own talk show!

If you're loaded:

DVD box sets. Who wouldn't love to receive the entire seasons of "Sex and the City," "The Sopranos," or better yet, the Audrey Hepburn collection? Let your mom feel like a movie star with an all-access pass to so-worth-it features and extras.

Get a magazine subscription. Who wouldn't love to get Vanity Fair a week before it hits the newsstands? No doubt your mom will love to get the latest gossip in all its glossy 300+ page glory. And let's not forget the free perfume ads.

Gift checks, gift checks, gift checks! What's that? Gift checks to spend in Tower Records? We can almost see that silly grin on her face. It's a safe gift if you don't know whether she'd like that Josh Groban DVD or book on Elvis Presley.

If you're strapped:

Raid the VCD discount bin. If you don't think you have the time to download an entire movie through Kazaa, raid your neighborhood-friendly discount bin for awesome finds at low prices. Most classic films go for P100. "Ben-Hur," anyone?

Make her a CD. This is a no-brainer, and the easiest to do. Put together her fave tunes, or the latest Top 40 tracks. She'll be making like Cher in front of the mirror in no time.

Make a movie. Corny, we know, but you'll be surprised how pleased your mom will be with whatever you come up with using that little handycam of yours. Make a music video, reenact a movie scene—get all your siblings and cousins to jump in (and offer to direct it, so you won't have to look like a goof onscreen).

sex and the city
COMPLETE FIRST SEASON
DVD
disc one

A workaholic

She's constantly busy. Her day is stretched to the limit, meeting after meeting, deadline after deadline. She comes home exhausted almost every day, all because she wants to give you everything you could need and want.

If you're loaded:

A new bag. Get her a nice bag that will hold everything she will need in an entire day—from her keys and beauty kit to her gadgets and office documents.

A PDA. Your mom's hectic schedule surely needs organization. Help her have her contacts and her appointments always within reach by giving her a digital assistant.

If you're cash-strapped:

Be your mom's masseuse. Help her muscles relax by giving her a long massage.

Cook dinner for her. Make sure that it's ready and waiting by the time she gets home from the office. If you're a disaster in the kitchen, ask someone with the know-how to help—maybe your *yaya* or even your dad.

Clean the house. There's nothing like coming home to a freshly de-cluttered and organized house to make your mom happy.

A housewife

MOM'S vocation is taking care of you, your dad, your siblings and the home they have built for you. She cleans the house, cooks, makes sure everything is running smoothly. On her special day, let her take a break and make her feel your appreciation for all the love she's showered upon you.

If you're loaded:

Go electronic crazy. Give up on having that vacuum repaired. It's time to get a new one to lighten your mom's housework load. Get everyone to chip in to buy something new that can help her with the housework—new pots and pans, a new toaster, or even a new rice cooker.

Do the fancy resto thing. It's time you gave your mom a break and make someone else do the cooking for her. You might have to restrain her from wanting to wash the dishes herself afterwards, though.

Book her a day at the spa, or a summer getaway for your parents. About time your mom got to relax and spend time away from the noisy kids. And, well, you get alone time as well!

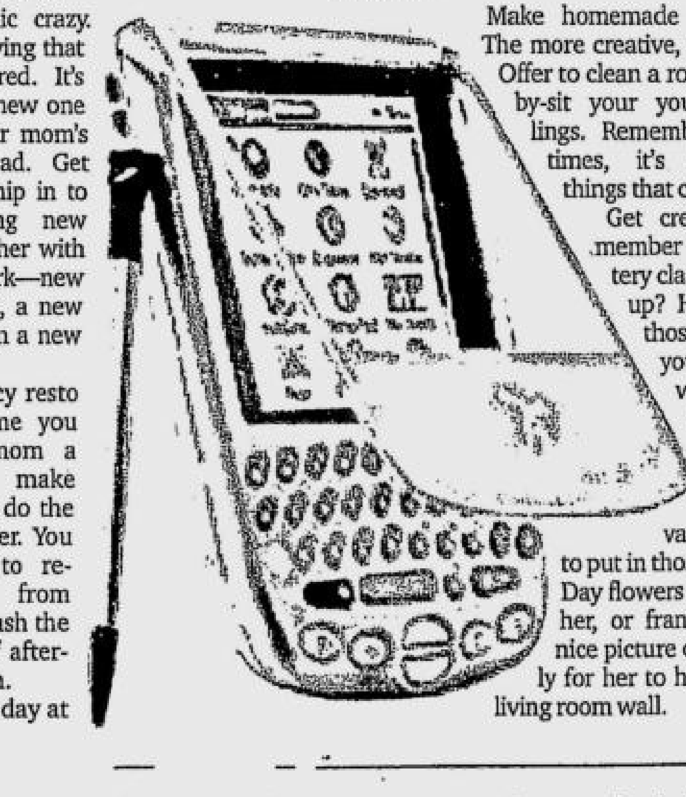
If you're strapped:

Make breakfast in bed. This never fails. Unless, of course, you burned the toast, broke too many eggs, and forgot to put butter in the pan before pouring in the pancake mix.

Make homemade vouchers. The more creative, the better. Offer to clean a room, or baby-sit your younger siblings. Remember, sometimes, it's the little things that count.

Get creative. Remember that pottery class you took up? How about those shots you took with that beaten-up SLR camera?

Make a vase for her to put in those Mother's Day flowers you got for her, or frame a really nice picture of the family for her to hang on the living room wall.



In the end, it's not the amount you spent, it's the effort you exerted

Do you want to be part of the 2bU! family?

IF writing is your passion and meeting deadlines is a breeze for you, we invite you to become one of us.

First, tell us about yourself—who you are, what you do, what makes you tick. Tell us about your disastrous blind date, if you wish.

Then, choose from the following (or if you're feeling up to it, you can work on everything).

Write a movie, album, book or TV show review.

Make a profile of your favorite personality (He/she doesn't have to be someone we know.)

Impress us with a travelogue.

Write a feature story on something you think we should know about.

Please make sure each article is less than 500 words.

Send this, along with your other work samples (no poetry, please), to ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph.

We will be accepting applications until May 14.

Show mom you care without spending too much

By Anne Rose A. Elicaño
2bU! Correspondent

SOME time ago, I received a forwarded e-mail relating a story about a little boy who gave his mother a necklace made of stringed-up macaroni shells and paint. The little boy grew up and found the macaroni necklace in a special compartment of his mother's jewelry box, along with her costliest rings and bracelets.

Obviously, the most cherished gifts one can give mom need not be expensive. Painstaking effort, captured memories, and little deeds that make life easier for her are often all that's needed in making Mother's Day special.

Organize a mommy lunch for her and her friends. Plan this together with the children of her friends (all of whom you are familiar with already; some of them might even be your *kinakapatid*). Decorate the place with their photos when they were younger, other memorabilia, and play their favorite CDs (Barbra Streisand? Diana Ross?).

Donate to charity in her name. If your mom is part of a charity or social welfare organization, spend a day (or more) helping the group with its projects. You can bond more with your mom and find fulfillment in helping others at the same time. If she isn't, pledge your time to an orphanage and pledge the effort to her as your Mother's Day gift.

Make a videotape of your dad, your grandparents, and her co-workers saying what they love best about her or what makes her the superwoman that she is. You can even ask your younger siblings to act out a skit or spoof movies for a cuter, more endearing effect.

Give her a memory jar. It's good to keep your family's best memories with your mom bottled up, so to speak. Write them down in colored or scented pieces of paper and then roll them individually. Place them in a clean glass jar then wrap a ribbon around the jar or paste on the bottle a label you've made yourself.

Give her a foot spa. It's easy to do this because everything you need can be found right at home—warm water, a towel, a water basin, essential oils, and/or flowers. Make her a cup of her favorite tea to sip while her feet are being pampered.

Write and illustrate a children's book. This is a fitting tribute to the woman who read "Cat in the Hat" for you until you drifted to dream land. Write her a fairytale where she is the heroine, illustrate, and then bind the pages together to look like a storybook. If writing stories doesn't come easily, just make a picture book, perhaps titled "The ABCs of Why Mom is Special," in which each letter of the alphabet stands for a character trait that you love about her.

Make her clay imprints. Take some self-drying clay and make imprints of your hand, perhaps carving sign language. There are websites that can guide you through this, so you can imprint "I love you, Mom" or any message you want. This looks even better when you have different-sized hand imprints on the clay, so ask your dad and younger siblings to form their own messages alongside yours. Part of the fun is asking your mom to guess the messages represented by the imprints.

Make her a jigsaw puzzle. Slip in a customized jigsaw puzzle inside your Mother's Day card. The answers can be anything from unique trivia about her (you can ask your grandmother for help) to funny expressions only both of you use.

Make a "Mom and Me" CD. Compile the songs both you and your mom commonly like (or tolerate, at most). Aside from reminding her of you, the CD can also be played during long family road trips to avoid fights over the radio dial. To make this gift even more interesting, make and design the CD jacket by pasting pictures of both of you and writing out her favorite quotes or lines from the songs.

Write her a letter, a long, heartfelt one in nice stationery. Letters are definitely cozier and more personal than manufactured cards or e-mail greeting cards. Take time to write, so that you're able to put to paper everything you want to say and so that your handwriting is neater (a letter that looks like a hastily scrawled note defeats the purpose of the whole thing). Spritz her pillow with her favorite scent and then place the letter beneath the pillow to surprise her.

E-mail the author at elicano_ar@yahoo.com

It's the thought that counts—as well as the creativity

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Special treat for moms

DREAMSCAPE has a special treat for mothers with "Bond with Mom," an event co-presented by Moms & Kids magazine.

Kids can treat their moms to a day of fun rides, games, prizes and surprises. Gifts await parent and kid in look-alike costumes. The two will also have a chance to appear in Moms & Kids magazine.

Mothers and children can participate in the program with a 3-5-minute minute entertainment number. Music or minus-one should be provided by the participants. Call 457-4963 or 0917890-8511.

Mother and kid can also participate in parlor games and interactive contests.

Dreamscape, a fully airconditioned indoor amusement center, is at the 4th level of Robinsons Galleria. It has numerous rides for kids and teenagers, with around 150 video arcade games and network gaming machines.

Dreamscape is under Robinsons Recreation Corporation, which also operates Dream Zone at Robinsons Place Manila, Imus, Metro East and Iloilo and at Robinsons Starmills Pampanga. Call 633-7641 locals 192 to 198 or 631-7594.

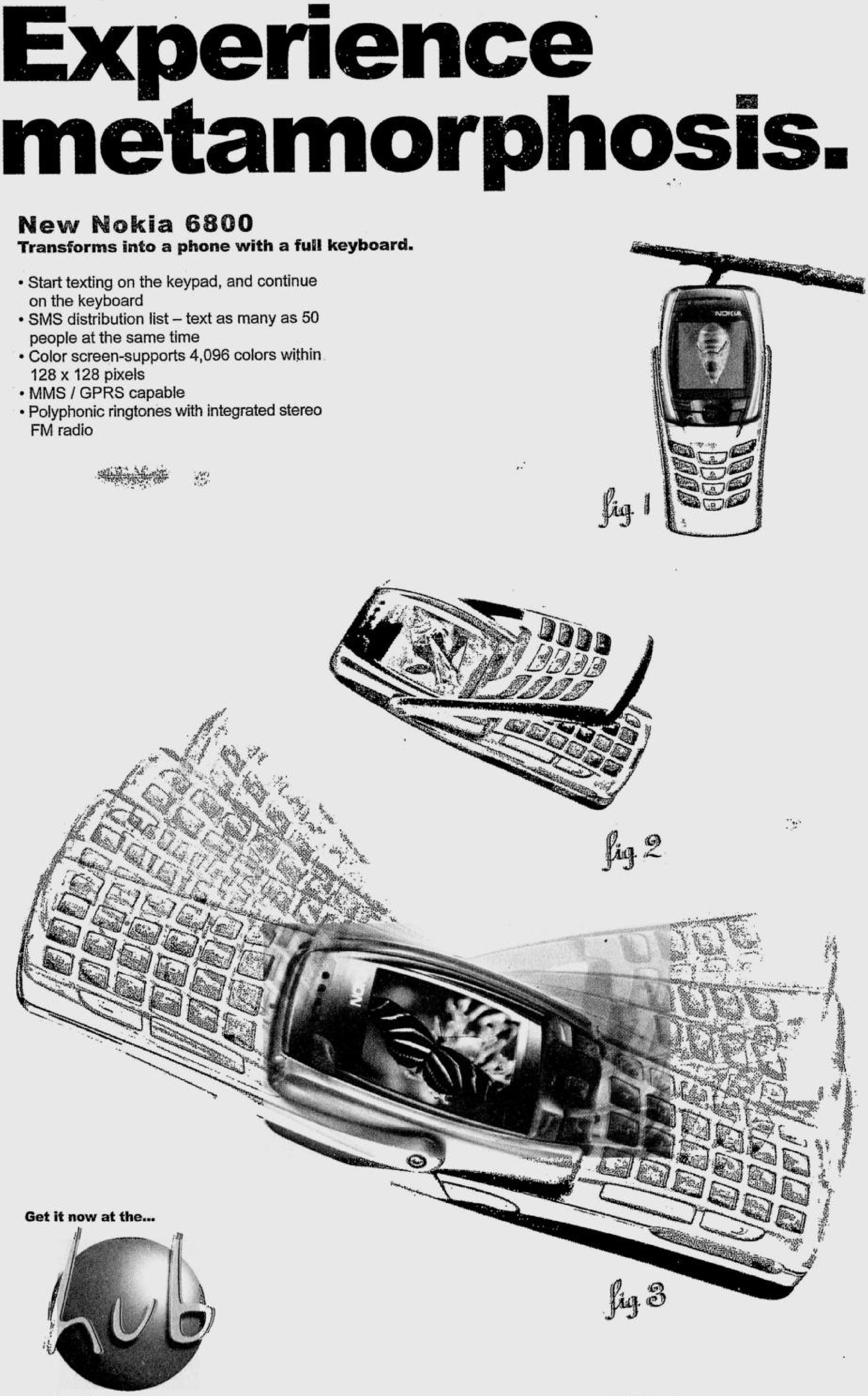
Mother's Day at the Cove

ON Mother's Day, Island Cove will pamper Moms with the special treatment they deserve.

All Moms dining with their families at Island Grill, Fishing Village and Island Café will be given a gift pack of Nestlé Chocolates, Dove Facial foam and body soap, Gold's Gym day pass and other treats. Plus, if their table bill reaches at least P750, Mom will receive a coupon for complimentary Body Shop beauty items and an Indian "head-to-shoulder" massage by well-trained Spa Medical personnel. More gifts are in store for participants and winners of the "Best thing about being a Mom" on-the-spot writing contest.

Island Cove is located in Kawit, Cavite, and may easily be reached via Roxas Boulevard and Coastal Road. It boasts of well-appointed hotel rooms and cottages, a wide array of leisure and entertainment facilities and several specialty restaurants.

Call (02) 810-3732, 810-3718 or 810-3718 or text 0916-7203339 or 0920-6277037 or visit www.islandcovephil.com.



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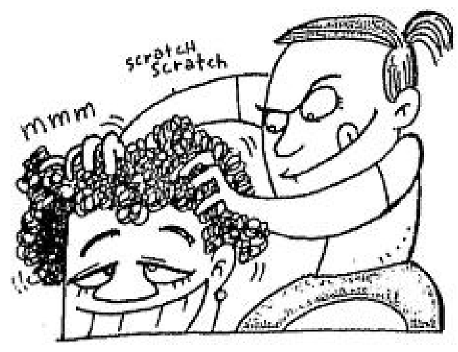
49 ways to say 'I love you, Mom'

By Bunny Anne Gapit
2bU! Correspondent

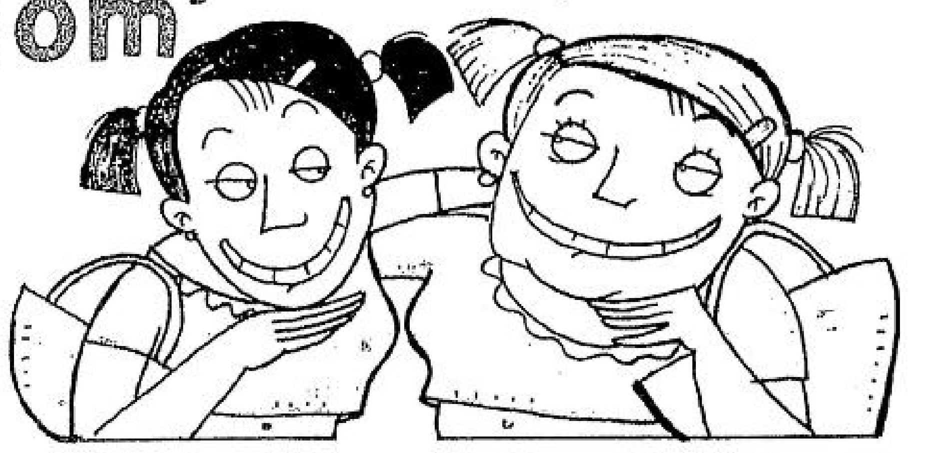
ASIDE from affectionate hugs and kisses and doing our share in household chores, there are a thousand more ways to show Mom she is dearly loved.

1. Scratch her itchy scalp.
2. Pluck momma's gray hair.
3. Always compliment her cooking.
4. Fix her a cup of coffee and prepare *kesong puti* and *pandesal*.
5. Save the best part of the day's dish for her.
6. Don't move out of the house when she doesn't want you to.
7. Don't get married yet.
8. Don't bicker with your spoiled sibs.
9. Before her bath time, prepare a kettle of hot water, especially during cold mornings.
10. Peel the fruits she'll eat.
11. Serve her the sea's bounty you deboned yourself.

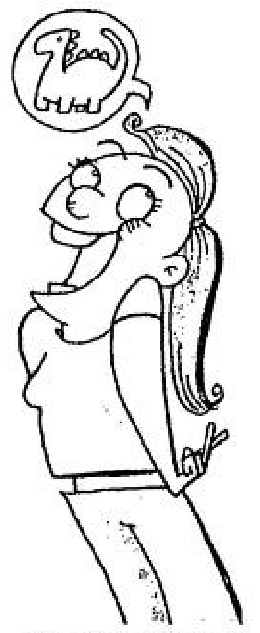


12. When someone gives you a compliment, say, "*Mana kay mommy*," within her hearing distance.
13. Tell her you look like siblings.
14. Tell her she's "lugi" between her and your dad.
15. Tell her your friends tell you she's hot.
16. Tell her she's prettier without makeup.
17. Promise her you will buy her a house first before you buy one for your future wife.
18. Never whine at her face how being insolvent sucks.
19. Bring to her the newspaper in the morning.
20. Scratch the itchy part of her body when she tries to reach for it.
21. Don't make her call for you more than twice.

HAY NAKO
DON'T GO ANAK!!
stephB.



22. Don't get pregnant during puberty.
23. Drive her to and from work.
24. Attend bingo/mah jong sessions with her.
25. Sing the old songs she likes.
26. Share your umbrella with her when strolling together.
27. Lie on her arms for a couple of seconds.
28. Wear a personalized shirt that says, "I love Mom."
29. Use or wear whatever handmade stuff she made for you.
30. Be the one to open the gate/door when she arrives.
31. Help her carry her things.
32. When she runs out of load, let her use your phone.
33. Create a mother's day greeting in your phone's picture editor and send it to her.
34. Pay her fare when you're in a public utility vehicle.



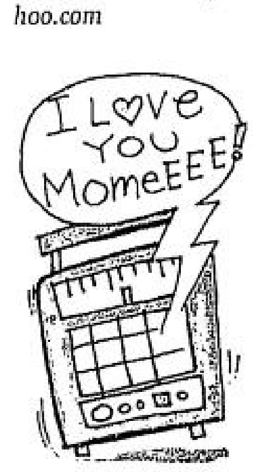
ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

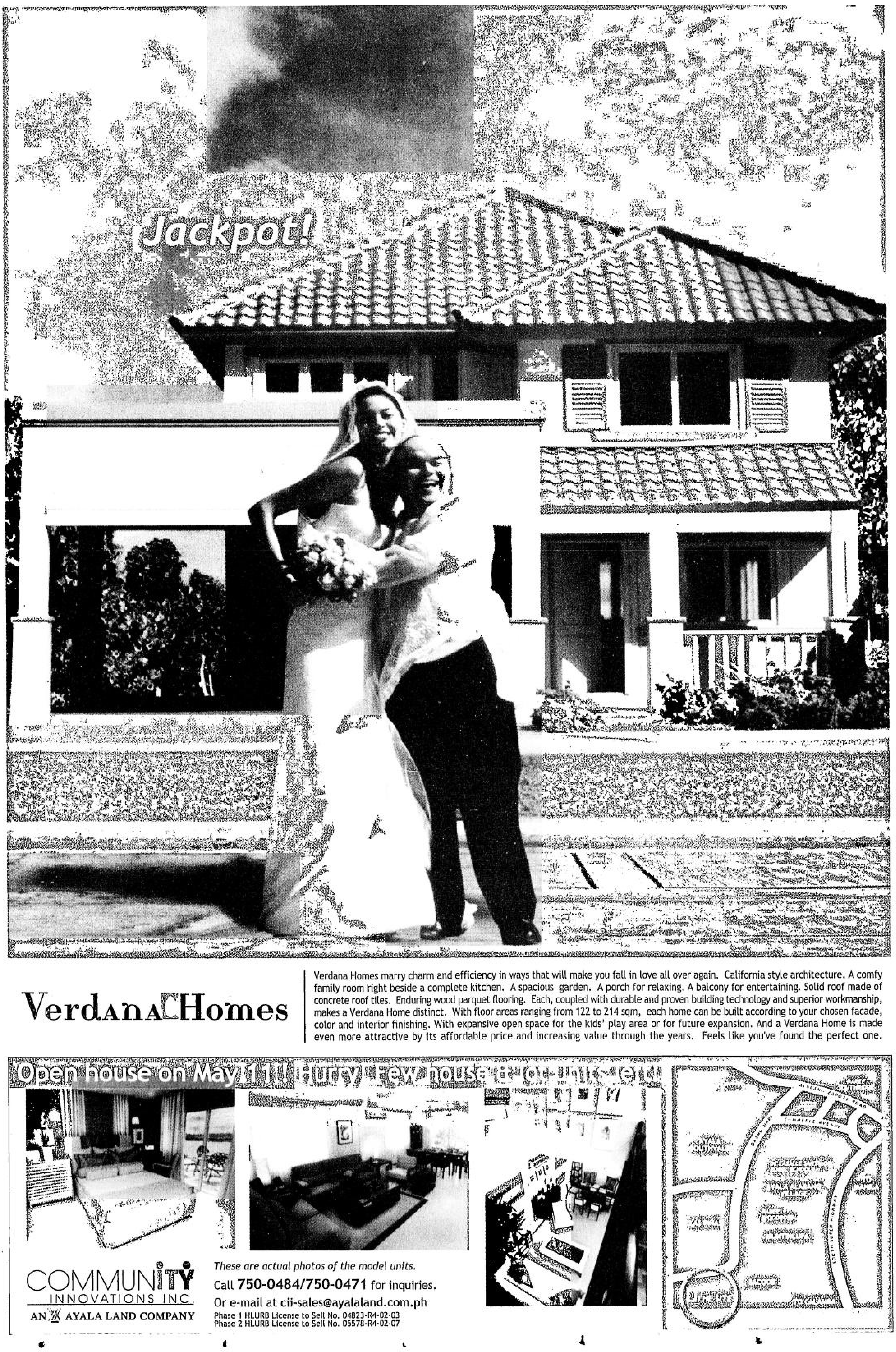
35. Wipe off her sweat or tears.
36. Put her picture in your wallet. Or take a solo picture of her.
37. Compose an old song into her phone's composer.
38. Comb her hair or fix it into a ponytail.
39. Put toothpaste on her toothbrush.
40. Offer her floss.
41. Put ice on her drinks.
42. Reheat her meals when already cold.
43. Get her slippers when she needs them.
44. Eat the packed lunch she prepared for you.

45. Don't ask for a raise in your allowance.
46. Don't invent non-existent school projects and expenditures.
47. Greet her on the radio.
48. Greet her through the papers.
49. Send her a greeting in one of the text shows.

Make her feel special on May 11. Happy Mothers' Day!

E-mail the author at keewich@yahoo.com


I Love YOU MomeEEE!



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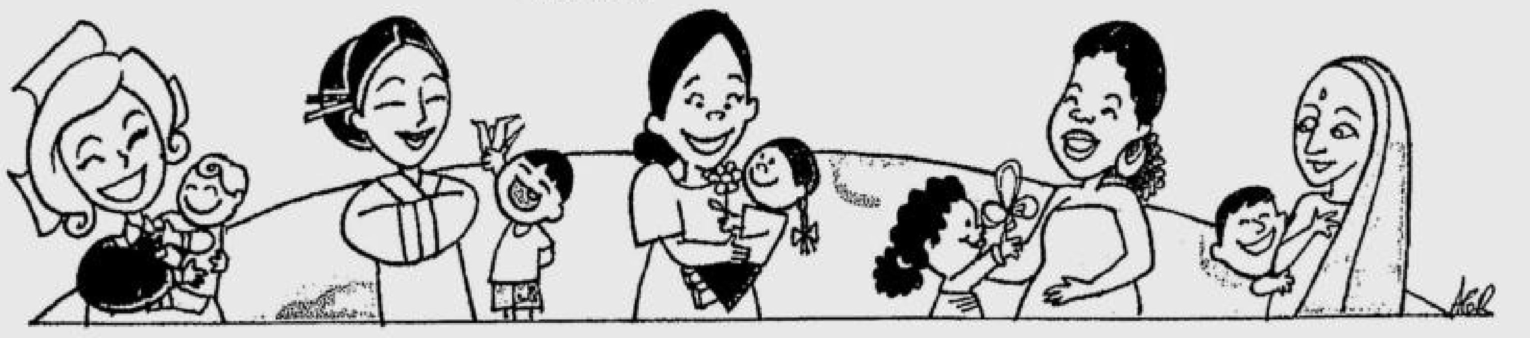


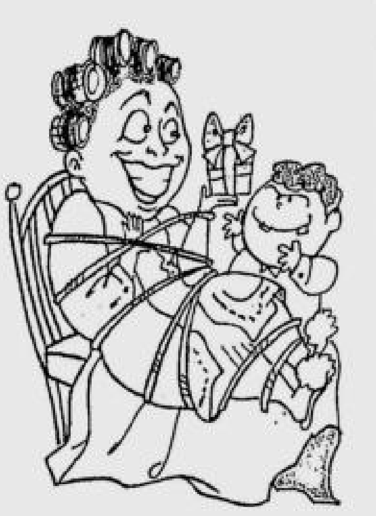
Mother's Day celebrations around the world

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

WE might call it by different names and celebrate it in different ways, but all of us celebrate this day to honor the irreplaceable person is our lives: Mother.

The beginning of Mother's Day can be traced back in 1872 in the United States when social reformer Julia Ward Howe suggested a day to honor mothers. This day was supposed to be dedicated to peace, and was celebrated by gatherings she organized in Boston. In 1907, Anna Jarvis lobbied for a nationally recognized Mother's Day. Her own mother tried to establish "Mother's Friendship Days" to heal the scars of the Civil War. Seven years later, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday of May as a national holiday for mothers.

Serbians honor their mothers in an unusual way. On Mother's Day, or "Materice," the children sneak into their mother's bedroom very early in the morning and tie her up. When she wakes, and is "surprised" to find herself in this strung-up situation and promises her children to give them gifts she has hidden under her pillow.



In Spain and Portugal, Mother's Day is closely linked with Christianity, and is celebrated during the early days of December. This day is seen both as a tribute to the Virgin Mary and a time when children honored their mothers.

Shortly before Mother's Day, the Swedish Red Cross sells plastic flowers, and the money earned would be used to fund vacations of mothers with many children.

In France, Mother's Day is celebrated as one would a birthday. Children draw cards and recite a poem as a surprise to their mothers. On this spring Sunday, called Fete des Meres, mothers are the center of attention, and the entire extended family gathers to present a beautiful cake to the celebrant.

The Hindu people celebrate a 10-day festival referred to as Durga Puja to honor Durga, the Divine Mother. She is the most important of all the Hindu gods, and is physically unusual. She is supposed to be very tall and has 10 arms, each holding a weapon to destroy evil.

The Japanese also celebrate Mother's Day much like the Americans do. First observed by Christians in the early 1900s, this Western practice was prohibited during World War II. However, this was revived after the war, partly to console the women and children who lost husbands and fathers. Nowadays, children display pictures in an exhibit called "My Mother." This exhibit travels to different countries, and this enables children to see how other children live in other parts of the world.

In England, Mother's Day is known as "Mothering Sunday," and is held on the fourth Sunday of Lent. This celebration honors both mothers and Mother Church, since Christianity spread throughout Europe. A special cake, sometimes called the mothering cake, was often given to moms just like the French.

Trivia on mothers

- Some African tribes like the Assam do not call themselves families. Instead, they refer to themselves as *maharis* or "motherhoods."
- Chinese family names often begin with a sign that means "mother" to honor their moms long past.
- Japan's Imperial family believe themselves to be descended from Omikami Amaterasu, the Mother of the World.
- Ancient Hindu scripture credits Kali Ma, the Great Mother, with the invention of writing.

- The Greek word "meter" and Sanskrit word "mantra" mean both mother and measurement.
- Of all the children's entertainers, the most popular is Mother Goose, whose stories have been loved and adapted for many generations.
- Native American women are honored with the name "Life of the Nation."
- Ancient Egyptians believed that Bast was the mother of all cats, sacred animals during their time.
- The Bible credits Eve with being the "Mother of All the Living."
- Mother Earth is also known as "Terra Firma," a Latin translation of some lines of the Greek poet Homer's poems.

Sources: www.theholidayspot.com, www.agirlsworld.com, www.chennaionline.com

ILLUSTRATIONS: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

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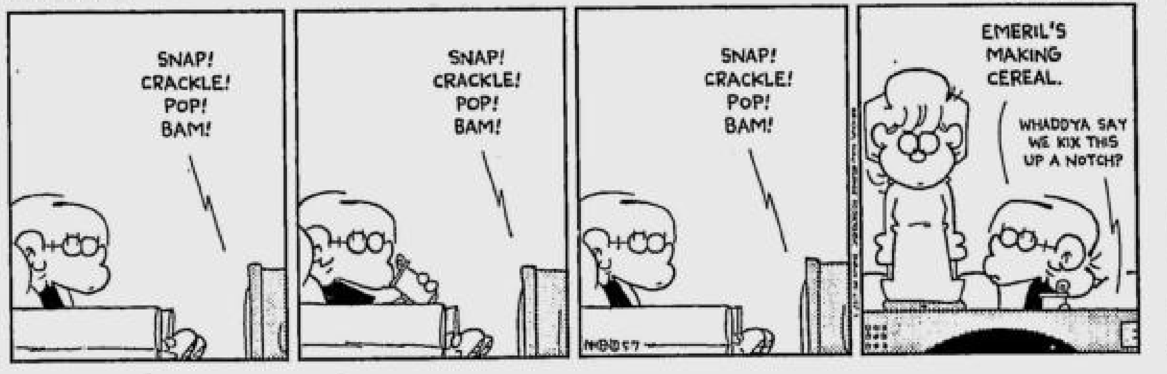
WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2003

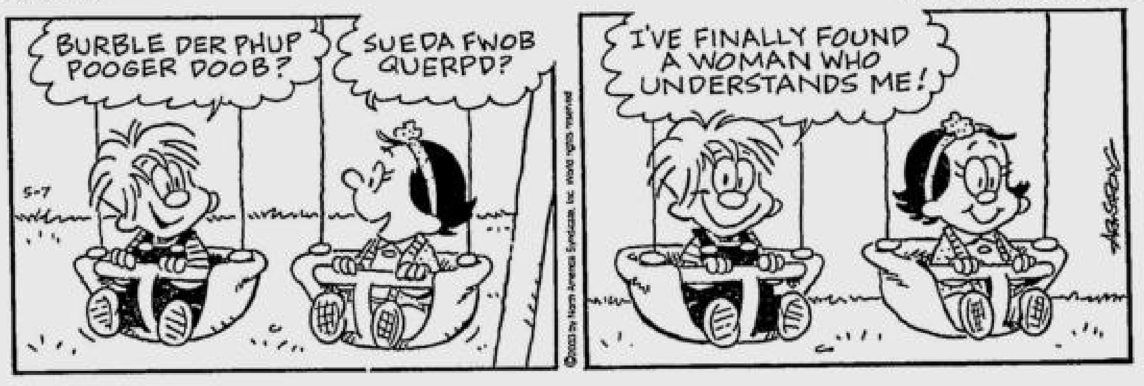
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


SNAP! CRACKLE! POP! BAM!
SNAP! CRACKLE! POP! BAM!
SNAP! CRACKLE! POP! BAM!
EMERIL'S MAKING CEREAL.
WHADDYA SAY WE KIX THIS UP A NOTCH?

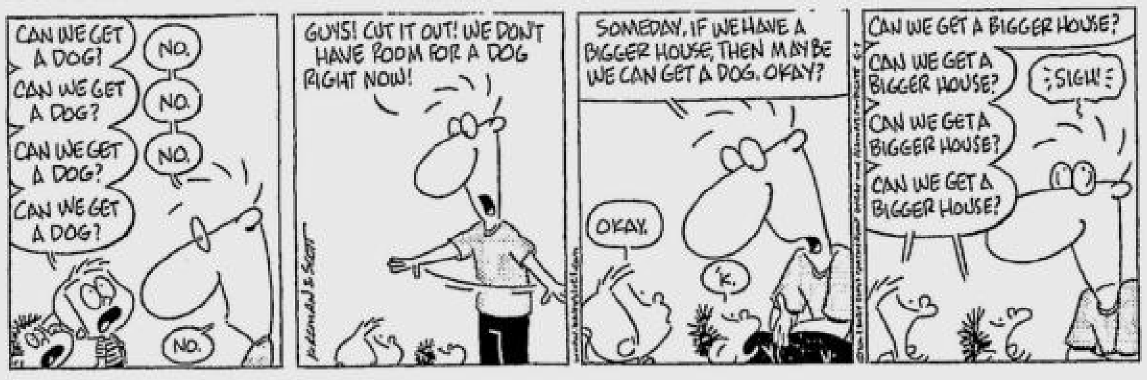
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


BURBLE DER PHUP POOGER DOOB?
SUEDA FWOB QUERPD?
I'VE FINALLY FOUND A WOMAN WHO UNDERSTANDS ME!
5-7

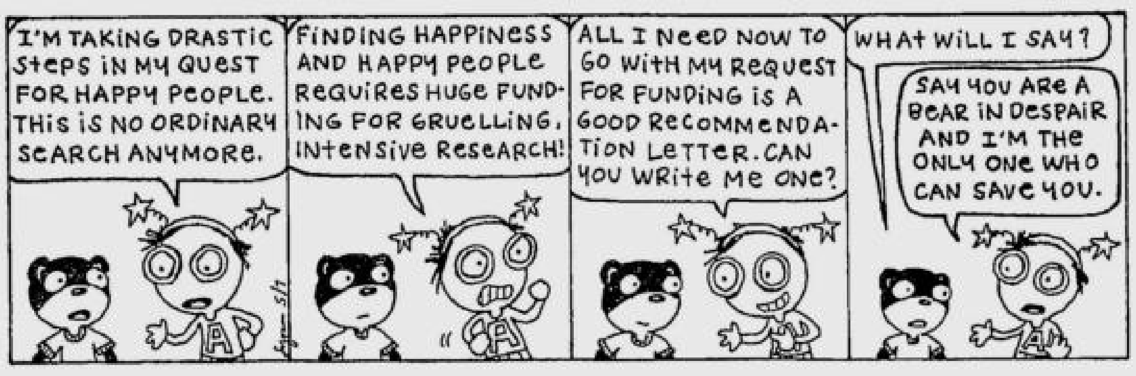
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


CAN WE GET A DOG?
NO.
CAN WE GET A DOG?
NO.
CAN WE GET A DOG?
NO.
CAN WE GET A DOG?
NO.
GUYS! CUT IT OUT! WE DON'T HAVE ROOM FOR A DOG RIGHT NOW!
SOMEDAY, IF WE HAVE A BIGGER HOUSE, THEN MAYBE WE CAN GET A DOG. OKAY?
OKAY.
'K.
CAN WE GET A BIGGER HOUSE?
CAN WE GET A BIGGER HOUSE?
CAN WE GET A BIGGER HOUSE?
CAN WE GET A BIGGER HOUSE?
SIGH!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'M TAKING DRASTIC STEPS IN MY QUEST FOR HAPPY PEOPLE. THIS IS NO ORDINARY SEARCH ANYMORE.
FINDING HAPPINESS AND HAPPY PEOPLE REQUIRES HUGE FUNDING FOR GRUELLING, INTENSIVE RESEARCH!
ALL I NEED NOW TO GO WITH MY REQUEST FOR FUNDING IS A GOOD RECOMMENDATION LETTER. CAN YOU WRITE ME ONE?
WHAT WILL I SAY?
SAY YOU ARE A BEAR IN DESPAIR AND I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE YOU.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are caring and nurturing to the people around you. You want harmony in your surroundings, and you adore beauty. You can be outspoken and convincing about whatever you believe in. Learn to let go of certain aspects of your life this year. Create the space for new things to enter.
Birthdate of: Sonny Liston, world heavyweight champion boxer; Enrique Iglesias, singer; Don Rickles, actor/comedian.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a wonderful day to enjoy friends, groups or clubs. Flirtations, parties and entertaining diversions with movies, the theater and professional sports will please you.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You feel confident at work today. You have the courage and boldness to propose ideas to bosses and VIPs now. You believe in yourself, and because of this, others believe in you as well.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Plans for travel or expanding your world through advanced education are exciting. You are one sign who hates to be bored and loves to learn. (Plato said, "Knowledge is the function of being.")

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a wonderful day for business, commercial ventures and fund-raising. Be careful that you do not commit to spending more money than you can, however.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): It's important today to be conscious of yourself and what you're doing. You have to know how others react to you before you know what your next move will be.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a wonderful day at work! Your sense of timing leaves others full of admiration for you. You're in the right place at the right time saying the right thing to the right person.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a good business day for financial speculation. Beware a tendency to expect too much for too little. Maintain your realism.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You have big plans about residential moves or improvements at home. Think positive; however, there is a chance that you could bite off more than you can chew.

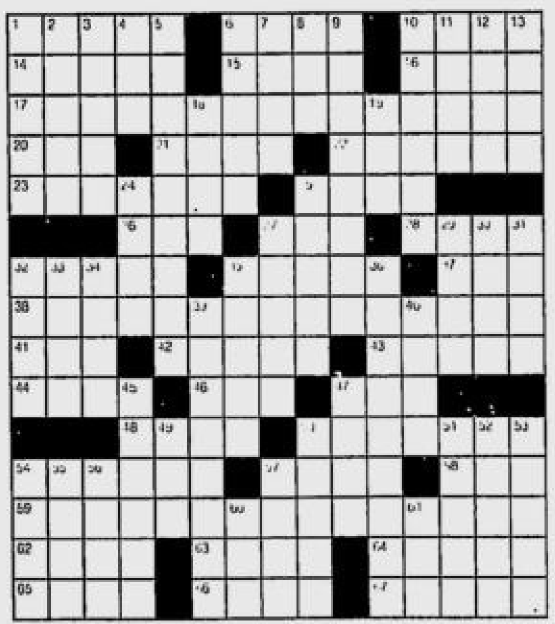
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Your optimism and positive attitude are contagious today! Everybody you meet goes away glad to have shared some time with you. Your upbeat, breezy style is encouraging.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Although this is a good day for business and making money, do not foolishly overestimate your abilities. Things look excellent—but nothing is perfect.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You can talk anybody into anything today! Your self-awareness and confidence are particularly encouraging to family members. You see what needs to be done now.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): It is easy to get behind-the-scenes cooperation for whatever you want to do at work today. People are ready to listen to you. (Fortunately, you have something to say.)

DAILY CROSSWORD



By James E. Buell
Edgewater, FL.
5/7/03

ACROSS
1 Serious situation
6 Present packaging
10 Secluded valley
14 Tried for another term
15 Parks of 1955 headlines
16 Begin again
17 Of late
20 Family men
21 Charged particles
22 Dig down
23 Grandfathers
25 Thumb through
26 PAU's successor
27 Sunshine St.
28 Volvo rival
32 Mimickers
35 Ecstasy
37 1996 Olympics host
38 Of late
41 Parseghian of football
42 Caravan stopovers
43 Humorous remarks
44 Stay on in the army
46 Sot's shakes
47 Bask
48 Poisonous evergreens
50 Cuts canines
54 Small bar
57 Fills with wonder
58 Yale student
59 Of late
62 Cookie choice
63 Challenge
64 Uncanny
65 Stitched together
66 Hauled into court
67 Appraises

DOWN
1 Hang in loose folds
2 Breathe easy
3 Get up
4 Wrestlers' pad
5 Italian appetizer
6 Birdhouse occupants
7 Squabbles
8 Combustion residue
9 Chose paper over plastic
10 Putting areas
11 Act of faith?
12 Outer limit
13 Showdown time
18 Subdivision subdivisions
19 Meadow
24 Drucker or Sahl
25 Narrow cuts
27 Ice sheets
29 BMW rival
30 Hurry-up letters
31 Inlets
32 Half-open
33 Unadulterated
34 Birthright seller
35 Outdoes
36 Isolate
39 Locked horns
40 Pipsqueak
45 Monty with the flying circus?
47 Glimpsed
49 Before, briefly
50 Winter wool
51 Ticker
52 "__ Venner: A Romance of Destiny"
53 Web destinations
54 Flicks about people
55 As to
56 Fricassee
57 Land measure
60 __ de vie
61 Green veggie

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

S	C	A	N	S	■	I	S	S	■	S	T	A	B	S
A	L	B	E	E	■	N	T	H	■	V	A	L	U	E
S	E	E	R	S	■	T	E	A	■	E	L	I	T	E
H	O	L	D	T	H	E	P	H	O	N	E	■	■	■
■	■	■	S	E	A	R	■	N	A	G	■	A	B	C
A	R	T	■	T	I	M	S	■	F	A	R	R	A	H
S	O	R	E	■	K	E	E	N	■	L	E	O	N	E
W	A	I	T	J	U	S	T	A	M	I	N	U	T	E
A	R	E	N	A	■	H	I	K	E	■	O	N	E	S
R	E	R	A	N	G	■	N	E	T	S	■	D	R	Y
M	R	S	■	S	O	S	■	D	E	E	S	■	■	■
■	■	■	S	T	O	P	A	N	D	T	H	I	N	K
T	A	H	O	E	■	L	I	E	■	T	I	B	I	A
A	R	O	S	E	■	A	D	S	■	E	M	I	L	Y
G	E	T	O	N	■	Y	E	S	■	E	S	S	E	S

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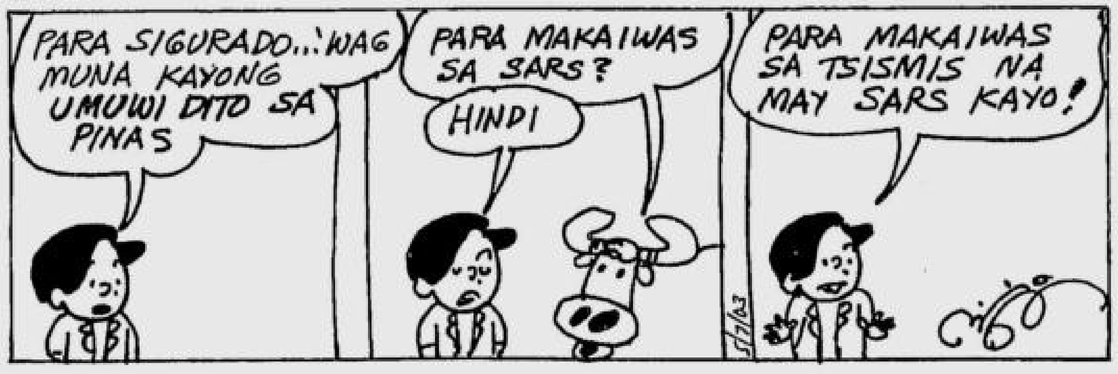
5/7/03

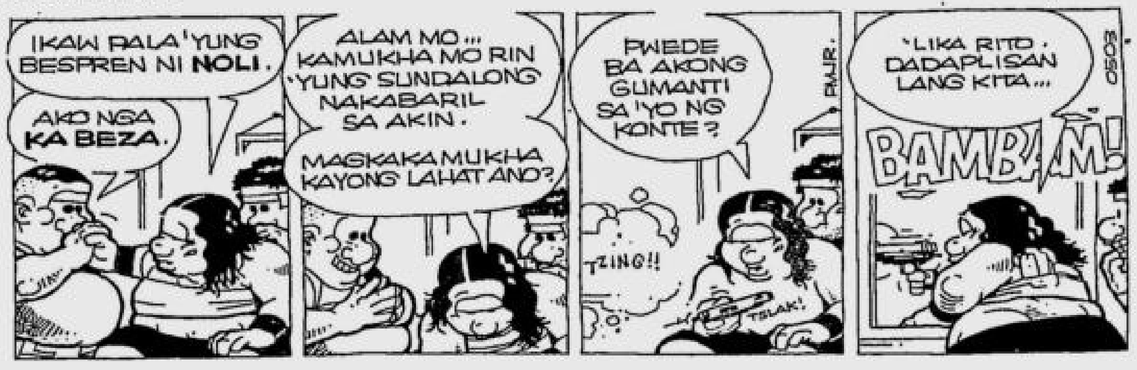
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PARA SIGURADO...WAG MUNA KAYONG UMUWI DITO SA PINAS
PARA MAKAIWAS SA SARS?
HINDI
PARA MAKAIWAS SA TSISMIS NA MAY SARS KAYO!
5/7/03

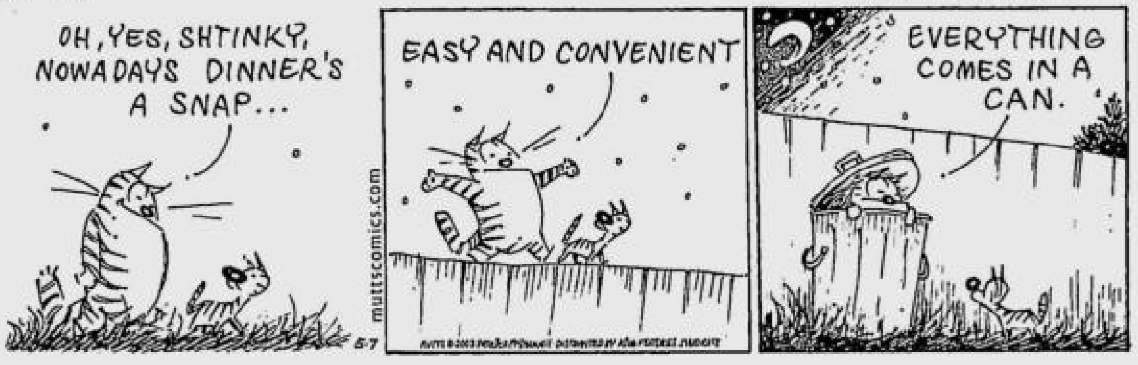
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


IKAW PALA 'YUNG BESPREN NI NOLI.
AKO NGA KA BEZA.
ALAM MO... KAMUKHA MO RIN 'YUNG SUNDALONG NAKABARIL SA AKIN.
MAGKAKAMUKHA KAYONG LAHAT ANO?
PWEDE BA AKONG GUMANTI SA 'YO NG KONTE?
TZING!!
TSLAK!
'LIKA RITO. DADAPLISAN LANG KITA...
BAMBAM!
0503

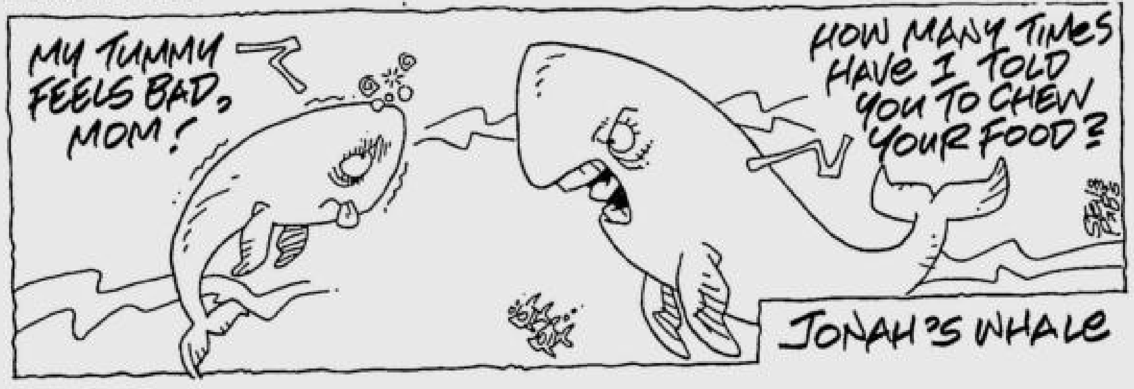
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OH, YES, SHTINKY, NOWADAYS DINNER'S A SNAP...
EASY AND CONVENIENT
EVERYTHING COMES IN A CAN.
mutts comics.com
5-7

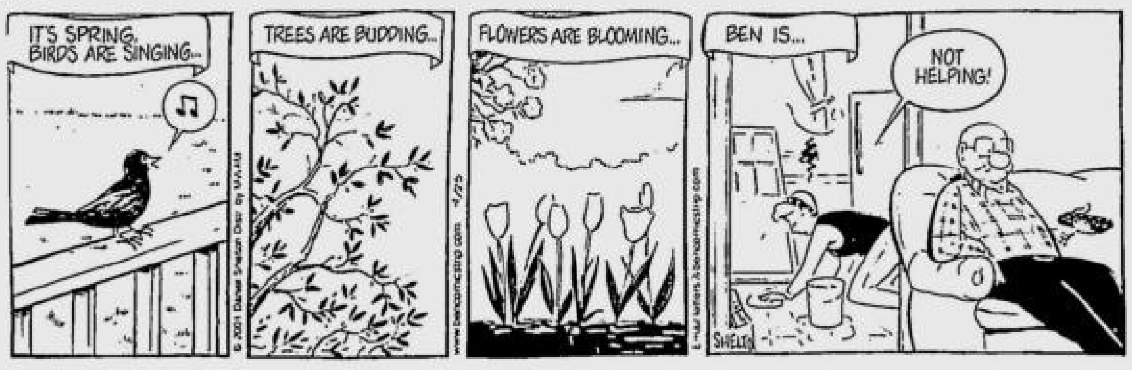
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


MY TUMMY FEELS BAD, MOM!
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU TO CHEW YOUR FOOD?
JONAH'S WHALE

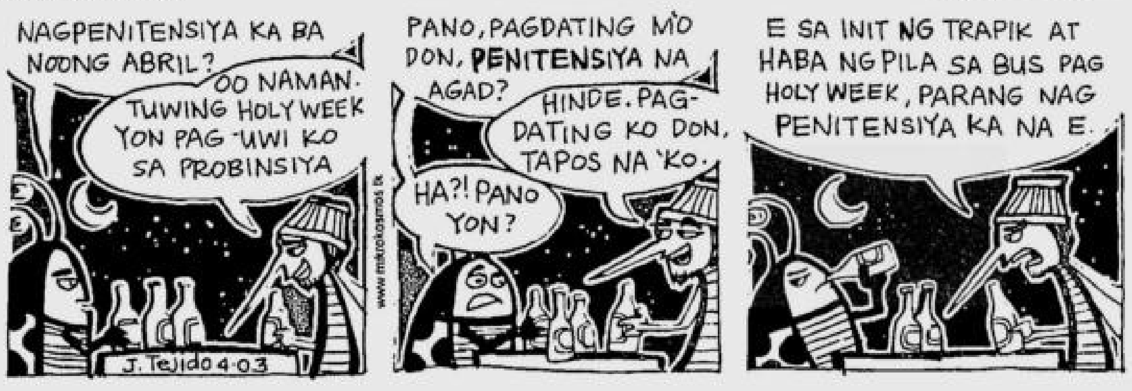
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


IT'S SPRING. BIRDS ARE SINGING...
♫
TREES ARE BUDDING...
FLOWERS ARE BLOOMING...
BEN IS...
NOT HELPING!

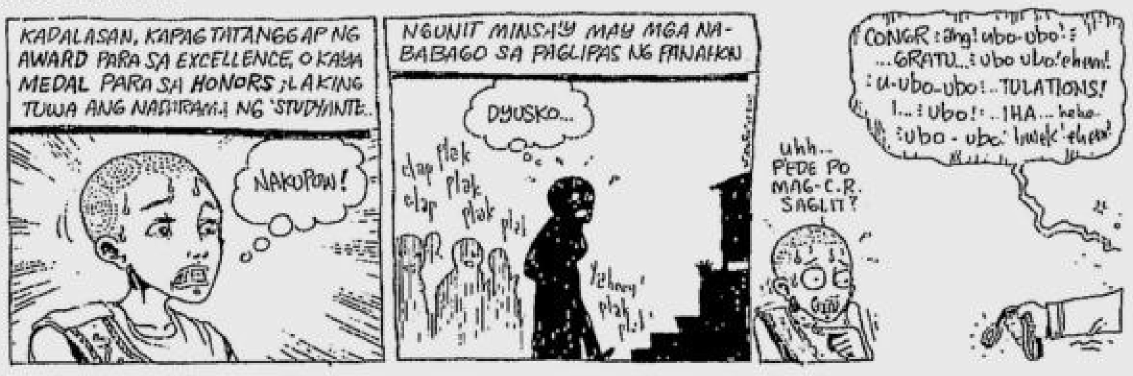
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAGPENITENSIYA KA BA NOONG ABRIL?
OO NAMAN. TUWING HOLY WEEK YON PAG-UWI KO SA PROBINSIYA
J. Tejido 4-03
PANO, PAGDATING MO DON, PENITENSIYA NA AGAD?
HINDE. PAGDATING KO DON, TAPOS NA 'KO.
HA?! PANO YON?
E SA INIT NG TRAPIK AT HABA NG PILA SA BUS PAG HOLY WEEK, PARANG NAG PENITENSIYA KA NA E.
www.mikrokosmos.tk

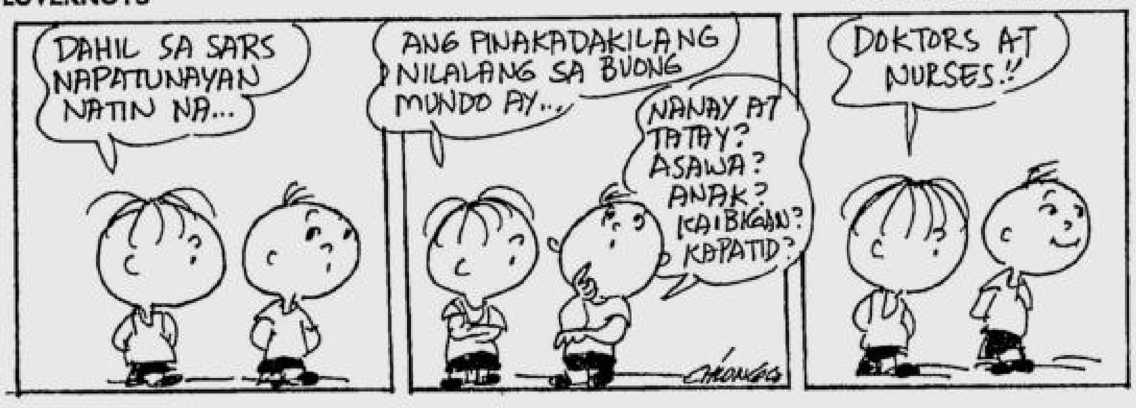
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


KADALASAN, KAPAG TATANGGAP NG AWARD PARA SA EXCELLENCE, O KAYA MEDAL PARA SA HONORS ;LAKING TUWA ANG NADARAMA NG 'STUDYANTE.
NAKOPOW!
NGUNIT MINSA'Y MAY MGA NABABAGO SA PAGLIPAS NG PANAHON
DYUSKO...
clap plak clap plak plak plal
Yehey! plak plal
uhh... PEDE PO MAG-C.R. SAGLIT?
CONGR :ang! ubo-ubo!: ...GRATU..: ubo ubo! ehem! :u-ubo-ubo! ..TULATIONS! I... :ubo!: ..IHA... heho :ubo - ubo: ! huek! ehem!

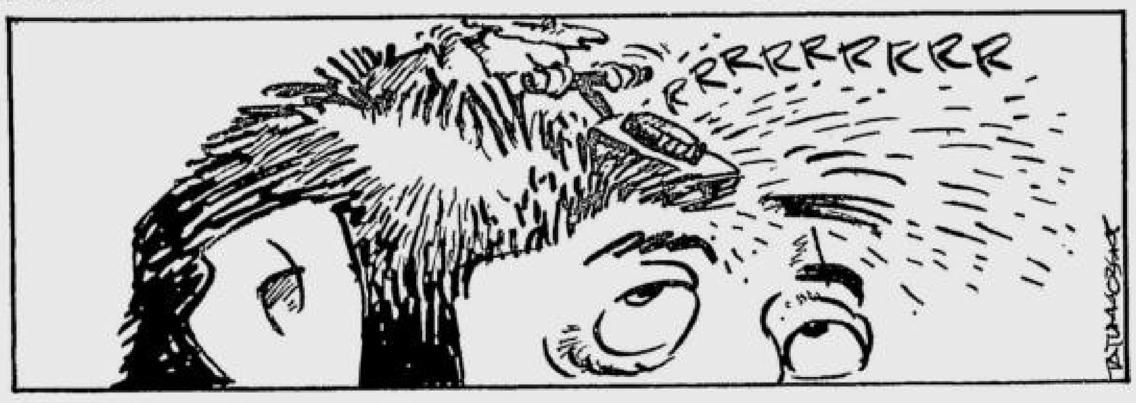
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DAHIL SA SARS NAPATUNAYAN NATIN NA...
ANG PINAKADAKILANG NILALANG SA BUONG MUNDO AY...
NANAY AT TATAY? ASAWA? ANAK? KAIBIGAN? KAPATID?
DOKTORS AT NURSES!!

TULDOK

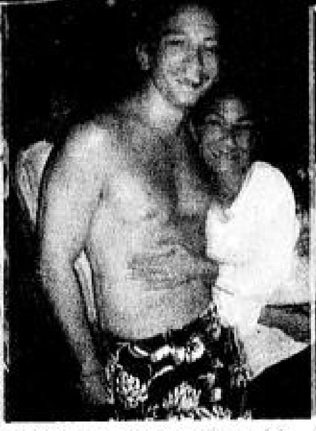
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

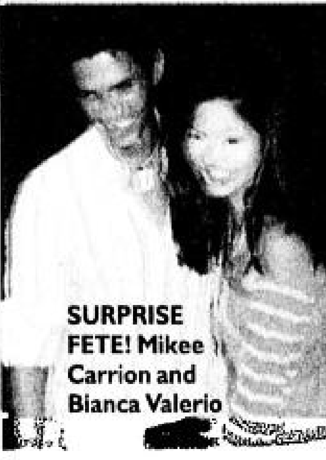
WHITE HOT. Tessa McDonald and Dale Villar

SMOOCHY! Angel Tan and Mike Jose at Hey Jude


TOUCHY FEELY. Chunchie Soller and Jackie Castillejo

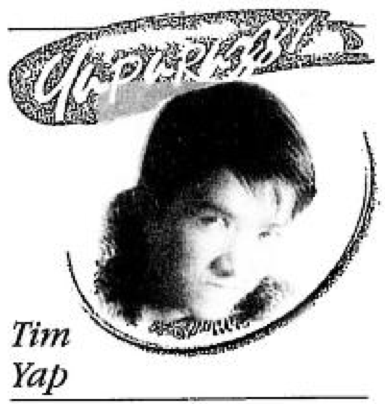
PEARLY SHELLS. Mikey De Leon and Kat Eckstein

MEN IN MALATE. Reagan Arcega and Wency Lagumbay


SURPRISE FETE! Mikee Carrion and Bianca Valerio

BEACH BOHEME. Noel Manapat, Angel Jacob and Chechel Joson

Don't tell Mama

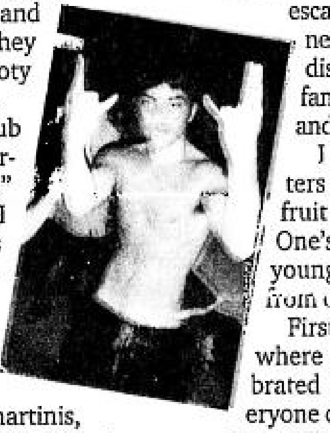


Tim Yap

"MALATE explodes once again tonight!" The text message was loud and clear; the action was bound to be fiery, with downtown dolls and city scenesters shaking and hopping from one party to the next. It was the opening of the red-hot new club Bed.

Bed has a look that would transport you into "queer as folk" kingdom, with a cruise-y scene set to DJ **Cocoy Puyat**'s pumping beats, half-naked revelers dancing on the ledge, and good luck getting to the bar. But for true-blue Orosa-philes, that's part of the thrill of the chase, I guess. While you're at it, check out the bathrooms, too.

The chill-out action outside with cafes on the Orosa strip betray the action that goes on inside Bed. There's a door policy complete with a guest list and army-type dog tags. But the reception and bouncer are very friendly—they realize that snobbish and snooty doesn't really work in Manila.



In fact, the scene's latest club is making waves with nocturnal lingo. "Let's go to Bed," "I'm going to Bed with..." "I had fun in Bed with..." "Let's all go to Bed!" And so on—you get the picture?

Anonymity is also a premium in Bed, with its dark red interiors that whisper, "Don't tell mama!" Yummy martinis, inspired by "Sex and the City's" hip-happy male equivalent, overflow from the two-level establishment, giving Malate-philes more and more reasons to give up sleep.

Blue-collar life

Before going to Bed, I co-hosted a party with **Markus Schmidt**, who arrived from a wine-tasting at Mamma. As a tribute to the Labor Day weekend, Fidel went the blue-collar route, playing down on its hipper-than-hip interiors and playing up on its rough and rugged side, with checkered shirts and hard hats that screamed sweaty seduction.

In the middle of it all, I couldn't avoid the strobe lights emanating from Acquario's courtyard, with a giant face of Madonna greeting the onlooker. How could you not enter? Warner and Gentxt had a booth that gave away CDs and allowed patrons to download tunes while Supermodel Diva hogged the mike wearing a super-tight corset and even higher heels.

DJ **Montano** had two red stripes on his face to pay tribute to his favorite Madge, while drag queens lipsynched to vintage Madonna.

Past midnight, the banned video of "American Life" was shown, and everybody stood in attention. The whole bar fell silent, trying to catch every detail of Madonna's latest take on war and the military.

No one uttered a word. And if anyone ever did, he would have been smacked on the face right there. After the first video loop, it seemed like the room wanted to bow down to the mother goddess, but instead the people gave the icon of reinvention hearty applause.

Weekend beach escape

The Labor Day shebang gave me my Boracay escape, but what greeted me were banners and banners of red and black, disrupting the azure waters of our famed party beach. So I just set out and savored the island vibe.

I stayed at the Pier One headquarters while having my daily dose of fruit shake with **Paul Sanchez**, Pier One's "Pierre One." We observed the young and the restless hip and hop from one spot to another.

First hop was at D' Mall's Mc Sandro, where beach master **Louie Cruz** celebrated his nth birthday with almost everyone on the island.

Juan Elizalde also just recently opened his new resto, Aria, and his chill place Cafe Del Sol, attracting a fair amount of hipsters to his beachfront.

R&B and hip-hop, with its sexy chill tempo, reigned on the island. A predominantly young crowd filled the bars and clubs. It was a scene out of prom-night-goes-on-spring-break—and I loved it!

Half-naked guys and dolls nonchalantly paraded their wares as they hopped from Pier One to Cocomangas to Hey Jude to Summer Place and back.

Sunset brought out tanned bodies ready for the all-night partying. Sunrise had revelers on a natural high (I hope), chit-chatting on the shores while pondering on their lives and the paths they were to take.

It just keeps getting better, partyphiles. So hang out and enjoy.

MICA Ruiz at Cocomangas

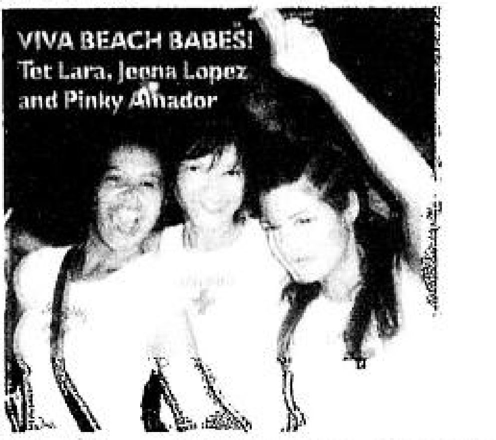
G SPOT. Great Ancheta

DON'T WINK. Rhett Eala in Bed

BED master Manolo

LABOR day reveler on the loose

HOT SUMMER. Paolo Cabalfin and Anne Matoto


VIVA BEACH BABES! Tet Lara, Jeena Lopez and Pinky Amador

MATERIAL GIRL. Victoria Londono at Acquario

BENCH IN BED. New Bench China image model with HK star Maggie Q

HOT BED. Looking down at the action in Bed

JUAN Sarte with his boys in Bed

LEDGE action in Bed

CHINA DOLL. Yaparazzi with top international model Lu Yan, star of the Bench China campaign

---

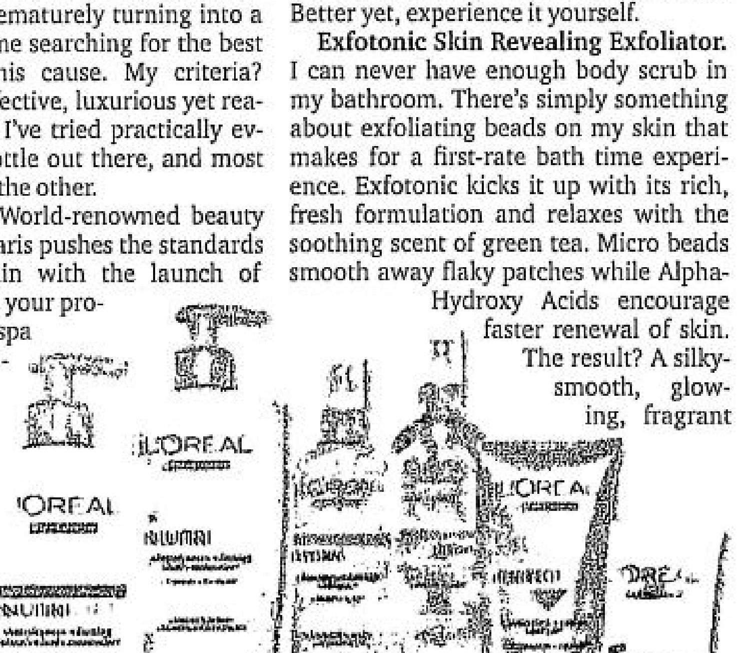
Pamper and rejuvenate your skin

Lora Gabol

MY MOM used to joke that I only "loved" myself from the neck up, noticing how three-quarters of my dresser was home to every kind of facial cleanser and moisturizer known to man. My first years of being a *kikay*-phile, I admit, were spent developing a deep bond with my face. While I was busy scrubbing off every rough spot on my cheek, my mother would be carefully slapping on what looked like liters of goop, a.k.a, body lotion, on every inch of her towel-wrapped body. The farthest I went for my body were my hour-long showers and the occasional squirt of body oil before a night out.

I don't exactly remember when I decided that the extra 15 minutes of applying body lotion was worth it, but my intense fear of prematurely turning into a prune still has me searching for the best products for this cause. My criteria? Fuss-free yet effective, luxurious yet reasonably priced. I've tried practically every tube and bottle out there, and most give you one or the other.

Good news. World-renowned beauty expert L'Oreal Paris pushes the standards higher yet again with the launch of Body-Expertise, your professional home spa range. Combining performance and pleasure, every product in this line specifically targets a particular concern, from uneven skin tone to excessive dryness, and yes, even cellulite! Believe in the power of beauty science. Better yet, experience it yourself.


THE L'OREAL Body-Expertise line

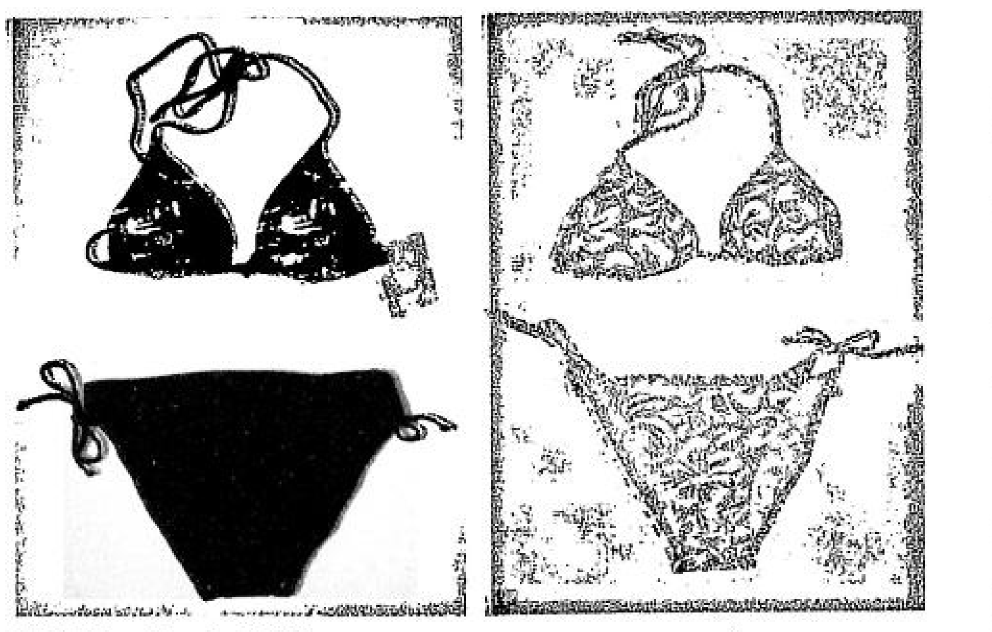
Exfotonic Skin Revealing Exfoliator. I can never have enough body scrub in my bathroom. There's simply something about exfoliating beads on my skin that makes for a first-rate bath time experience. Exfotonic kicks it up with its rich, fresh formulation and relaxes with the soothing scent of green tea. Micro beads smooth away flaky patches while Alpha-Hydroxy Acids encourage faster renewal of skin. The result? A silky-smooth, glowing, fragrant complexion from your neck down to your toes.

Hydrafresh Moisturizing Body Spray. With the phenomenal success of Hydrafresh for the face, it comes as no surprise that L'Oreal is releasing a version especially for the body. Perfect for women who just can't spare an extra minute, this express care product nurtures skin without the fuss. With an abundance of good-for-the-skin Vitamins C, E and B5, this moisturizer in a nifty spray bottle can be slipped into your tote for fruity-smelling treat anytime, anywhere.

Oleonergy Revitalizing Satin Oil. Aromatherapy and skincare in a bottle, anyone? Oleonergy can be used as a light massage oil, a subtle fragrance, a silky moisturizer, even an after-sun treatment. Bring it along on one of your beach holidays for perfectly highlighting sun-kissed skin. Orange and grapefruit essential oils stimulate skin, while gingko aids in micro-circulation for healthy, hydrated skin inside and out.

Nutrilift Anti-dryness and Firming Moisturizer. Definitely not your average body lotion, Nutrilift hits two birds with one stone with an innovative formula enriched with Ceramides, Par-ElastylTM for normal skin and Xeralipids and Par-ElastylTM for dry skin. Targeting common body problems like dryness and a lack of elasticity, Nutrilift is milk-like in texture and is rich in nutrients to nourish and balance skin. Unlike regular skin moisturizers, Nutrilift has patented Par-Elastyl, a potent firming agent that prevents skin from sagging due to time and environmental elements.

Perfectslim Contouring+Firming Body Gel. I'm predicting that this product will fly off beauty shelves faster than you gained all the weight from those regular Haagen-Dazs binges. Cellulite has always been every woman's biggest beauty nightmare, regardless of the fact that it is as natural as menstrual cramps and PMS for 99.9 percent of the female population. The L'Oreal Paris Body Expertise skin care laboratories have developed a formula enriched with Gingko-Caffeine that enhances skin circulation and activates tissue drainage to rid the body of toxins and Par-Elastyl that smoothes and increases skin elasticity. Some advice: Use the product with a regular exercise routine, toss the Cheetos into the trash bin, and you're practically guaranteed a smooth, slim silhouette sooner than you can imagine.


FLIRTY One Tuesday bikinis

White Perfect Triple Whitening Body Moisturizer. Finally, a body care reincarnation of skin-lightening favorite White Perfect triple whitening essence. For luminous, bright, radiant skin, include this treatment in your regular body regimen. Use it during the day to prevent damage with the help of its SPF 18 content, and at night to exfoliate with Beta Hydroxy Acid and regulate melanin production with Melanin Block.

Find the best Body Expertise products for your skin condition and watch your body transform.

What's new in Lora's *kikay* kit? My current *kikay* obsession cannot be found in a regular health and beauty, much less in a tube or a bottle! No woman in her right mind should be caught dead without a cute bikini this summer. Go floral, retro, geometric... anything goes as long as you have the attitude to pull off your suit of choice. The body you've been working hard for (and been cared for with L'Oreal's new body line) deserves to be shown off in the flirtiest, girliest bikinis in town. I'm loving One Tuesday bikinis, a selection of imported swimsuits from the US. Grab a set by calling Ysa Francisco at 0917-8972235 or sending her an e-mail at these addies:onetuesday@hotmail.com,www.onetuesday.cjb.net. Why not treat yourself to a pair of pretty board shorts while you're at it?

E-mail the author at pdi_vanityfare@hotmail.com

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Soon-to-be-wife scared of getting pregnant

DEAR Mark and Sep,

I'm engaged to a wonderful girl, and we're both excited and happy about sharing a future together. Right now, we're making preparations not just for a wedding ceremony but also for our marriage, and we naturally talk about children. We disagree over this matter, as I want kids of our own while she tries to convince me to at least be open to the idea of adoption. She says she doesn't want to go through pregnancy and childbirth because she's scared of the risks physically, emotionally and career-wise.

There is always tension whenever we talk about this matter, and I've been asking myself if this is an important sign of serious problems in our future marriage. What do you think?

JIMM

Niño Mark Sablan
& September Mabino

Dear Jimm, who's probably more than prepared to plunge into a lovely life of faithful ness, endless bills and diaper changing. Congratulations!

Wanting your own kids, especially within a marriage, is one of the most natural things in the world.

Why adopt when you can make one yourselves (and have a blast doing it)? But your soon-to-be mother of someone else's kids (if you give in) has a pretty valid reason for opting for adoption, even if it's rooted in fear. However, she needs to be reminded of a couple of things.

One: By not taking risks, you rob yourselves of the chance of experiencing, achieving, meeting or possessing something amazingly sublime. You may avoid possible pain, trauma or bummer-inducing whatever, but at the same time, you are also skipping away from what is probably God's greatest gift for you.

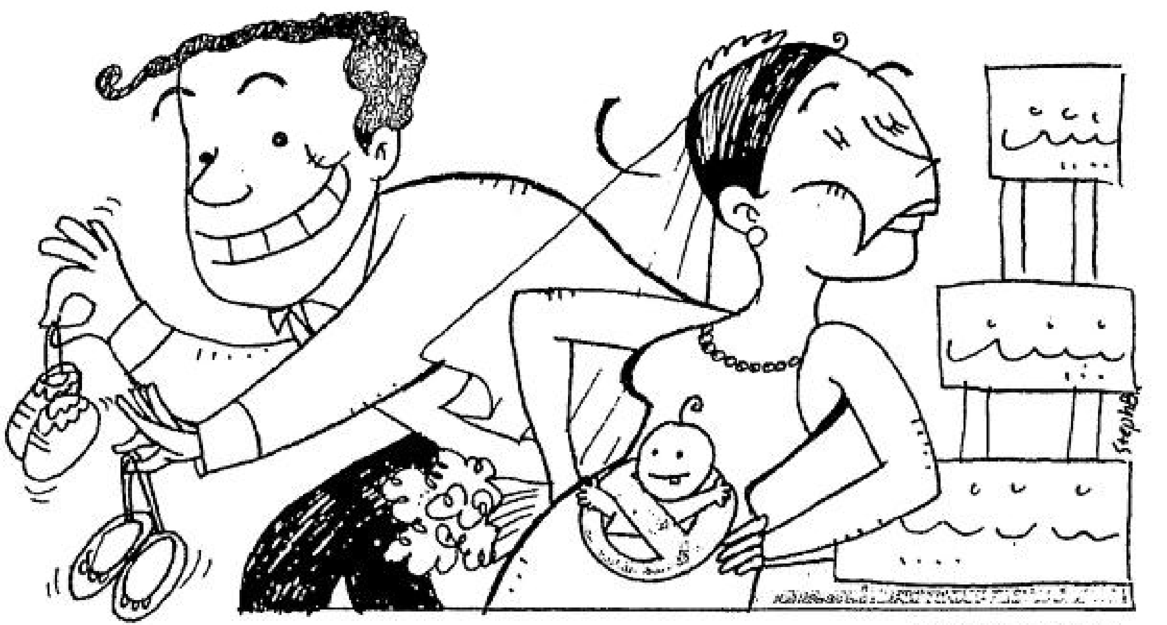


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Two: No matter how benevolent, humanitarian or supremely fulfilling raising an adopted kid is, nothing will compare to having your own flesh, blood and bones plant wet smackers on your face on a daily bas is. Even if it sounds as if I'm discriminating against adoption, I certainly am not. I'm actually up for it, especially when conception problems are present or the mother's own life happens to be threatened.

Correct me when I assume that you don't have problems conceiving, and that your fiancée's heart will not stop beating once the winner sperm reaches the trophy egg.

Hello, eight-zero? This is undeniably a very important sign of serious problems in your future marriage (if it pushes through, not that I'm attending the ceremony to express my desire for you not to be wed). So important is it that I want to highlight the word "important," boldface, underline and italicize it, change the font size to 36 and make the font style like that of "Maala-ala Mo Kaya's" (or maybe "Magpakailanman's").

We are not talking about your wedding's color motif here. We are talking about an indispensable part of every family life. If you end up adopting, your wife can show all her pearly whites and gums, but I'm sure you will feel resentful about the whole situation every nano-second of your married life—until the day you are lowered seven feet underground. If you end up with juniors or junioras, you can giggle all you want (maybe your wife can even giggle with you if she ends up satisfied—physically, emotionally and career-wise), even if deep within your heart's ventricles you know that your wife didn't initially want what you're enjoying.

Point: Arrive at a conclusion before you go to Hong Kong for your honeymoon. Not agreeing on such an important factor of a married life before actually exchanging "I do's" will guarantee a messy life together. I don't even understand why you already gave her a ring when you haven't completely come to the same conclusion.

Your fiancée should realize how lucky she is to have working ovaries.

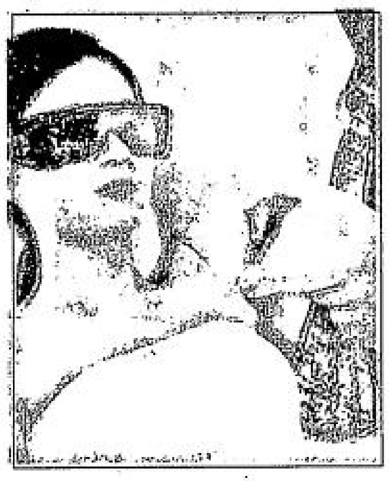
MARK

The tension between you and your fiancée over the matter of having children is definitely something for the two of you to be worried about, regardless of how small it is compared to all the other things that you both agree on. While the idea of kids may seem far off right now, what with the thrill of engagement still new, the two of you should sit down, talk about it and move fast, stating what each of you want in order to reach what Mark calls a conclusion.

Just as a beautiful wedding needs to be planned, so does a good marriage, and your different attitudes toward children is a worthy indicator of how bad things might go if you jumped into marriage before ironing out this difference. I suggest that you stop the wedding preparations first and shake off the love haze long enough for you to settle more important matters, such as this one. And until you come to a solution that is workable for you both, it's better and safer to put the engagement on hold, unexciting and unromantic as that may seem.

SEP

E-mail the authors at markandsep@yahoo.com



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